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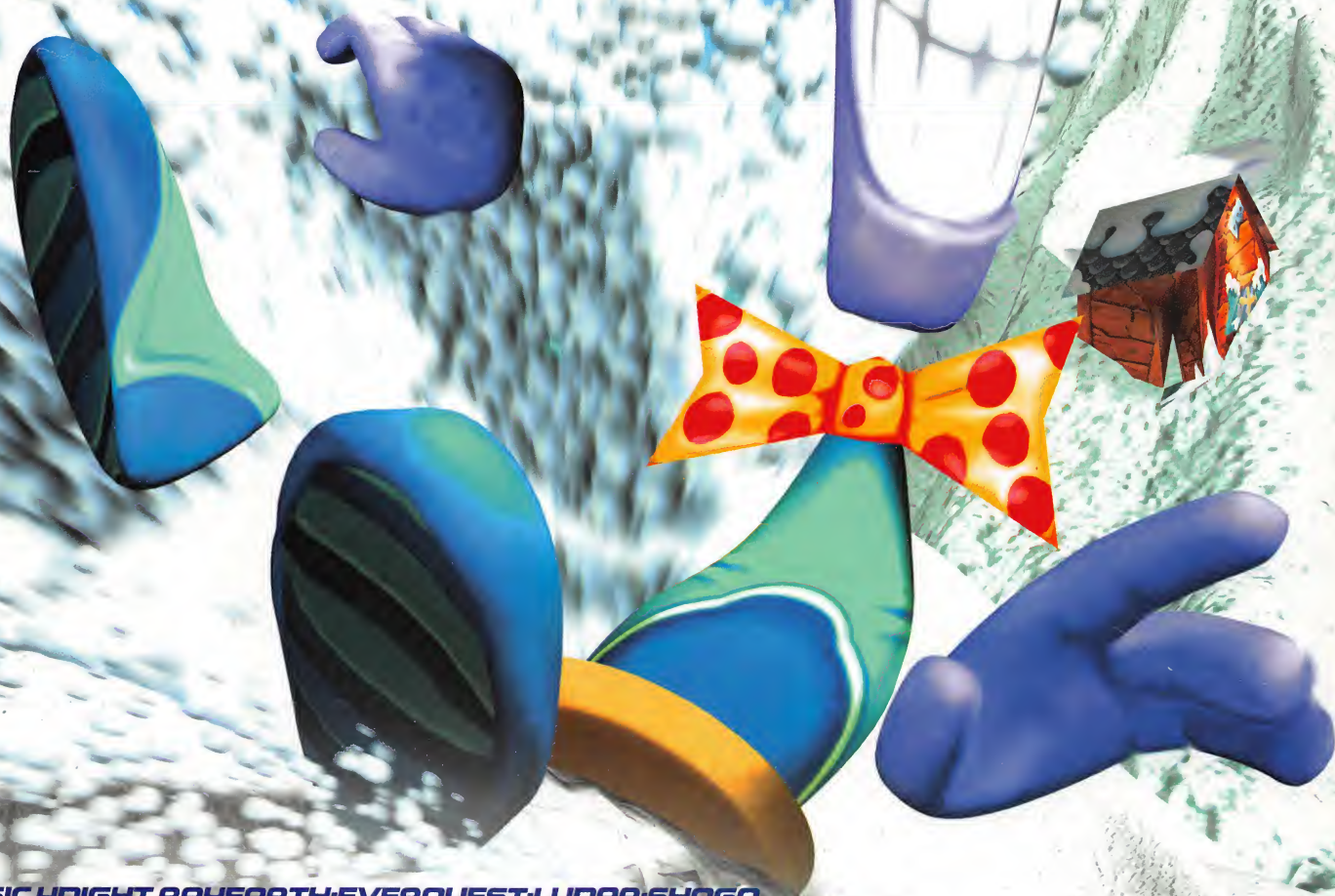
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Gamers' Republic

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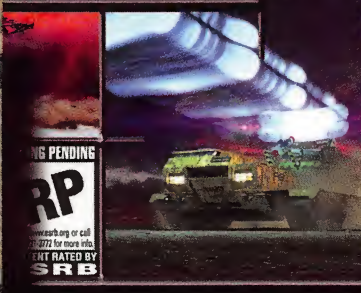
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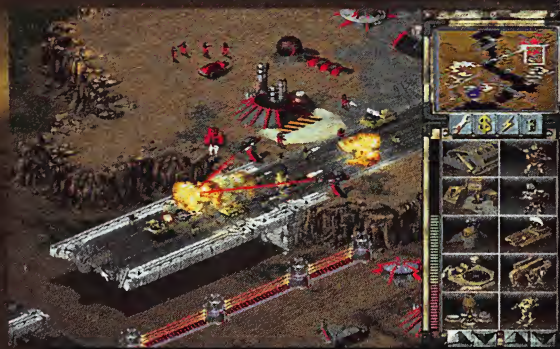


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Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

The next time I write in this column I will have my very own Sega Dreamcast, the first-ever 128-bit home video game console. It's funny: I can remember not so long ago saying in jest, "What's next, 128-bit consoles?" as we pondered the possibilities beyond *Mario 64* back when it shocked us in '96. And here we are, just over two years later, our ruminations a reality – and the Dreamcast is only the tip of the iceberg. Sony and Nintendo have yet to answer the call, but I assure you that when they do, the video game wars will heat up yet again. It certainly will be nice to see Sega back in the fray! I suppose the question is whether or not they'll be able to stake a big enough claim beforehand to sustain over the long haul. If Sega can rekindle the excitement and customer loyalty that they did when the technically inferior Genesis overtook the SNES, it is my opinion that they have a fighting chance. And how did they achieve that lofty goal? Software. From both a developer and consumer standpoint, the Genesis was user friendly to the point of being loveable. As a result, the games that Sega die-hards wanted to play – that made them Sega fans in the first place – all came out. From *Phantasy Star* to *Golden Axe*, first-party Sega games rolled out at a fever pitch. If Sega show the same type of focus with the Dreamcast that they did with the Genesis, I believe that regardless of how many polygons the Dreamcast can push in comparison to its competition, a healthy three-way race will ensue and hopefully help balance out the currently lopsided market. While the import launch is full of the wild and the wacky (quoting the wiggled one himself), I can assure you that the U.S. launch will be far more exciting in terms of variety and technological advancement. Games like *Turb*, *July*, and a good portion of similarly weird games showcased in our Sega New Challenge Conference report will likely never see the light of day in the U.S. This coverage is direct from Japan and has little emphasis on what will take place here about a year from now.

And new in GR this month, we've finally decided on a multi-review format we can all live with. It's called "Counterpoint." Check it out on page 88, and thanks for picking up *Gamers' Republic*.



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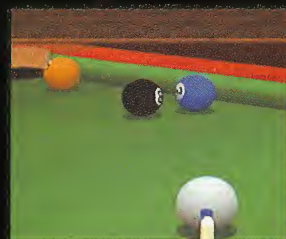
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TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE
A MILLENNIUM PROJECT



ISSUE 8 - JANUARY 1999

GAMERS'

TONIC TROUBLE .24



ORIGINALITY, INNOVATION AND GOOD CLEAN FUN ARE ALIVE AND WELL, BEGINNING ON PAGE 24, READ ALL ABOUT HOW MUCH FUN I HAD PLAYING - AND UBI SOFT HAD MAKING - TONIC TROUBLE, THIS MONTH'S COVER STORY.

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BUNGIE TAKE STRATEGY AND CARNAGE TO AN UNSEEN HIGH IN THEIR NEWEST BUILD OF MYTH 2. CHECK OUT A GUIDE TO THE LATEST MULTIPLAYER MAPS AND CHARACTERS IN OUR EXCLUSIVE FEATURE.





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Silent Hill .62

TERROR DESCENDS ON THIS QUIANT LITTLE TOWN... CAN YOU UNRAVEL THE MYSTERY BEHIND SILENT HILL? FULL PREVIEW AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH THE JAPANESE TEAM INSIDE...



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frontlines

A REPUBLIC'S FORAY, WE VISIT SOA FOR THE DAY!

Thursday, November 5 is a day that America will definitely remember. Sega welcomed...

...Gamers' Republic and a select group of the gaming press to fly the friendly gaming skies to a thrilling destination: Dreamcast '99. Our pilot, Sega's director of advanced developer support, Neal Robison, flew us to paradisaical lands filled with highly entertaining amusement rides, fabulous fighting tournaments, and some secret wonders that are, unfortunately, not to be mentioned just yet. Overall, the showing was just a teaser, but an excellent indication that when the Dreamcast launches in the U.S., it will be well equipped to please all gamers.



The Dreamcast is actually a very tight looking and feeling piece of hardware. Small in size yet heavy and well structured, the system's modern design underscores its appeal – that of superior power and contemporary architecture. The detachable modem was a sleek, rectangular device that is actually a part of the Dreamcast

itself: it is the lower left corner of the unit. The modem shown was 33.6 bps, which Sega stated as being an ideal speed for Dreamcast games, but talk of higher speeds, from 56k to a cable modem, are a possibility. For those who want the absolute best quality picture for their Dreamcast games, gamers will be able to send the video signal directly to a PC monitor and witness color and resolution that goes well beyond today's televisions. Hinting at the lineup of titles for the U.S. launch, live demonstrations were given of *Sonic Adventure* – which looked amazing – *Blue Stinger*, *Climax Landers*, and *VF3tb*. And for the first time on U.S. soil, we were holding Dreamcast controllers attached to a Dreamcast with *VF3tb* running on it! Check out our Tokyo Game Show report for the nitty gritty.

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PREORDER INSANITY!

Although Sega had told some of their partnership shops to stop taking preorders...

... many shops refused to abide by the company's request. The few shops that have filled their quota now have signs saying that they are taking preorders for the second shipment on Dec 4, although Sega have yet to confirm the number of units available. This means it's now impossible to buy a Dreamcast on the day itself! In preparation for the launch, shops have been rearranging their display shelves to give the Dreamcast center stage. The Saturn areas have been dismantled and relegated to a bargain bin corner, while the N64 has been pushed well to the back. All shops have now received one Dreamcast unit in a special display stand. Currently, you can only play with the setup options or listen to the music CD inside, but after November 10, shops will start receiving their first game demos. Then, and only then, will the legendary lines of people start to form, as the anticipation for the launch of the Dreamcast draws ever closer. *GR* already has a contact in Japan camping outside multiple stores, poised for action!



CREATORS TALK DC DANGER!

At the TGS Dangerous Creators Talk Battle, much was talked about, and in particular...

...about the Dreamcast. This is what some of the creators had to say:

"I've stopped work on 3 Million RPG and Real Sound 2 to concentrate on D2."

Kenji Eno (Warp),

"I'd like to make use of the Dreamcast's Internet capability."

Hideo Kojima (Konami),

"We currently have eight Dreamcast games in development."

Yoshiaki Okamoto (Capcom)

"I hope to release two dance and music games next year."

Tetsuya Mizuguchi (Sega)



Picture 1 (from left to right), Mr. Kenji Eno & Mr. Hideo Kojima

Picture 2 (from left to right), Mr. Yoshiaki Okamoto & Mr. Tetsuya Mizuguchi

SEGA'S NEW DC GAME DUO!

Sega's valued parent company, CSK/CRI, are working on the first flight sim and buggy racer for the...

...Dreamcast. Designed around *Blue Impulse*, a counterpart of the U.S. Navy's acrobatic team Blue Angels, *Aero Dancing* is a flight sim that features 10 fully rendered aircraft that capture the exact look of the squad. Also in development by CRI is *Buggy Heat*, an off-road racer in which eight vehicles compete across impressive snowy and desert courses using a high-fps 3dfx-type engine. The game also boasts a unique opponent performance tracking system, from which collected data can be displayed in real-time and applied to future races.



R.P.G. → F.R.E.E.?

Mr. Yu Suzuki has spoken more about Project Berkley. It is not an RPG, but a FREE...

...*(Full Reactive Eyes Entertainment)*. How this differs from the norm isn't yet known. Yu is recognized for the *Virtua Fighter* series, but less than 10 percent of the game will involve real-time fighting. There will be no VF characters, and no solid connection to VF4. However, all-new VF-style fighting techniques can be learned during your quest. Berkley will use the DC's four buttons and d-pad, (not the analog stick) implying menu functionality. © 1998 SEGA



YU-HOO! BERKLEY IS GO!

On Dec 20, at the Pacifico Yokohama (near Tokyo) Sega will unveil...

...*Project Berkley*. The event hall can seat 5,000 people and there will be up to three shows that day. Everyone is welcome to attend, as the event has generously been made free. The show will be longer than the *Sonic Adventure* event (70 min), and it is estimated that nearly one hour of game footage will be shown.



DRICAS ON-LINE!

Even without a Dreamcast you are now able to check out...

...Sega's Dreamcast home page, called Dricas (www.dricas.com). Although the page is all in Japanese, you can still view Sega related events such as the TGS and the SNCC2 as well as see all the latest game software news. It goes without saying that this site will probably receive a record number of hits as soon as the Dreamcast and its cool Internet "DreamPassport" properly takes off.



DEVILISH DC LOGO

Sega's games have long had the SEGA or saturn logo hidden...

...somewhere inside them, but with *Dirt Devils*, the Dreamcast logo finally makes its first official appearance. Debuted at the AM Show, *Dirt Devils* is AM R&D Dept3's new off-road racer. If you take a closer look at the billboards as you battle against the other racers, you'll notice that on two of the three courses the Dreamcast logo can clearly be seen. Look out for more games to make use of this in the future.

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DC DELAYS!

Sega have unfortunately announced delays...

...in their release schedule, which now pushes several titles into early 1999. Sega claim that the delay to *Sega Rally 2* is in order to implement the multi-player network option properly and fine tune the graphics. The current schedule now looks like this:

Nov 27: VF3tb, *Godzilla Generations*, *July*, *PenPen Triclon*

Dec 23: *Sonic Adventure*, *Evolution*, *Seventh Cross*, *Tetris 4D*, *Incoming*

Jan 14: *Blue Stinger*, *Sega Rally 2*, *Sengoku Turb*

DC DELAY: CHIP'S CHALLENGE?

When Sega originally announced the Dreamcast system launch, they claimed that 1 million systems would be available immediately on the day of the launch, November 27. Later, it was reported that less than half that number of systems would be available due to unknown manufacturing setbacks.

Now we know where the problem lies: Serious chip shortages. The Power VR Series2 chipset is currently in production, but it only recently passed NEC/Videologic's stringent testing analysis. Additionally, the chips are being produced for (a) Sega's Dreamcast, under the moniker of PVR2 DC, and (b) mass-market PCs, as the upcoming PowerVR2 3D acceleration chip. NEC's current foundries are unable to supply the 0.25-micron capacity chip "ingredients" in such large amounts, and they've been desperately shopping around for semiconductor manufacturers in Asia.

The Dreamcast has first priority, though, so the full 1 million quota of chipsets (and ultimately systems) should be met by spring '99.

SENMU YUKAWA - THE DC CROONER?!

Senmu Yukawa, an actual Sega manager who stars in Sega's comical...



...Dreamcast commercials, will now appear on the Dreamcast packaging itself. As if that wasn't enough, he has just finished recording the Dreamcast campaign song (called "Dreamcast"), which will go on sale on Nov. 25. A guaranteed chart-topping number one in the making? I do believe it could be so (well, at least in Japan, anyway). It is extremely unlikely that the vocal talents of Mr. Yukawa will make it over to the shores of the U.S.

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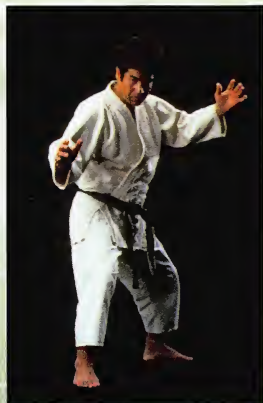


MAD SEGA SANSHIRO SEZ SAYONARA!

Software production may be dead for the Saturn, but that's not about to stifle the spirit...

...of its fan base. Hordes of enthusiastic gamers lined up in front of the Tokyo Joy Polis, waiting to enter the amusement center for the final gathering of the Sega Saturn Fiesta, a long-running party held for Saturn fans on the third Sunday of every month. After hours of waiting anxiously at the entrance, the doors were finally opened, siphoning the crowd to the main stage where Segata Sanshiro was forced to take refuge from the unwieldy mob. Huge screens were set up above the stage, playing the entire CM that Segata Sanshiro had worked on. The event culminated with tournament play and a farewell singing of the Sega CM theme song. With the success of this and past fiestas, a similar Dreamcast-themed event is expected.

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monthly gaming news

3 RIDGE RACERS? A DRIVING REVOLUTION!

Namco of Japan have recently announced that Ridge Racer Type 4 will now be shipped with a second disc containing...



...two versions of the original Ridge Racer. A new "High Spec" version will run at a cool 60 fps and will feature greatly enhanced car and background graphics. The second version will be the same as the original, and the idea is that you can compare them side by side to see the incredible difference. Both will include Time Attack, Time Trial modes and full JogCon support. As if that isn't enough, you will also be able to enjoy a Namco Catalogue '98 disc, which has every single PlayStation Namco release from 1994 to present day, and previews of new games such as Dragon Valor. Also included are four playable demos of Libero Grande, Tekken 3, Tales of Destiny and Klonoa. The set ships on December 3.

© NAMCO 1998



HADO-KEN IN YO' POCKET!

Good news for SF lovers! In addition to the complete arcade version of Street Fighter Zero 3, the...

...upcoming PS version will feature many exciting original elements. There will be more dramatic graphic effects when you attack opponents, additional story for Karin, immediately selectable Yuri, Yuni, and M. Bison, and PocketStation compatibility. Alternate costumes have been included for Chun-Li and Sodom over the arcade version's original six. Finally, M. Bison's (Balrog) stage has been added, once again depicting Las Vegas and its bikini-clad ladies.

One of the most interesting points is the interactivity with other players by using the new PocketStation (due to be released on the same day). After downloading your favorite character to PocketStation, by using mini games such as Ken's Shoryuken game you can make your character more powerful. Besides your main character, two more will be added to your roster, allowing for three-on-three play. When you fight against other players, you will have a three-on-three battle, but the difference is that if you win after enabling the option of betting characters, you can take your opponent's character away and use it. Of course, you can upload your more powerful character to the PlayStation and use him or her in the full game. Sounds good, huh?

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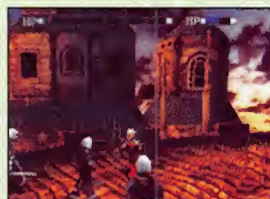
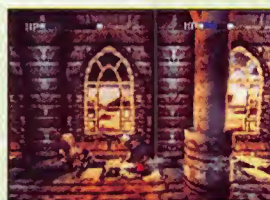


A VALIANT NEW NAMCO

Remember the 1984 arcade classic, Dragon Buster? A side scrolling action/adventure with...

...a few RPG elements, the game was released by Namco and enjoyed exceptional success throughout arcades worldwide. Now it seems that Namco wish to recapture the excitement that was caused by Dragon Buster by releasing a new PlayStation title called Dragon Valor. While graphically and aurally light years ahead of the original, it is supposed to foster those same deep feelings of adventure. Players must ultimately work their way through many different levels of action in order to defeat a dragon that lives at the end of each area. Apparently, the game uses a system called "Hereditary" play mechanics, in which the player (you) and a female character marry and create a child (the character used in the game). Depending on the female you choose to mate with, the game scenario can change, thus increasing the longevity of the adventure. Interesting method of character creation? Definitely! Look for more information next issue. This is shaping up to be another stunning Namco release.

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SIT IN VIBRATION NATION!

At over 50 amusement centers in Japan, you can now enjoy...

...a relaxing 10-minute massage for only ¥200. Namco's chair uses special air bags to give you a soft massage that will refresh you after your many hours of fighting with Tekken 3 or Soul Calibur. The Air Massager will appeal to young ladies in particular, and is part of Namco's desire to make the arcade not just a place for video games, but a retreat for general entertainment.

© NAMCO 1998



MGS SALES ARE ROCK SOLID!

Metal Gear Solid breaks all kinds of first-weekend sales figures by shifting over 350,000 units in America. Excitement and respect among other video game magazines has been pervasive, and rightly so, as the game is possibly the most entertaining PlayStation release we've played all year. And keeping this excitement (and nepotism) at a fever pitch, our own book department's Official Metal Gear Solid Mission Handbook has also scored rave reviews from fan and internet sites alike. In fact, Hideo Kojima himself was so happy with the guide, he asked for an extra 50 copies for the entire KCEJ team and even his own mother! You can read his thoughts on the strategy guide in our advert...

SUPER MARIO: CHRONIC GAMBLER?

A 256-meg party game co-developed by Nintendo and Hudson is slated for release on December 18. This huge N64...

...title, *Mario Party*, is one of most unique N64 titles of all time. It will feature six classic Nintendo characters, like Bowser, Donkey Kong, and the man himself. So, why did these two gaming giants team up? And why is the cart so big? Well, *Mario Party* isn't your typical party video game. It's a board game crossed with an action game designed for four-player competition. You spin the Roulette and advance towards your goal on the board. More than 50 mini-games are located on the board, depending upon the color you land on after the spin. Should you land on the same color as another competitor, a fighting mode is initiated. The idea is to collect coins by winning mini-games and fights.

Then, with these winnings, you bet cold hard cash on the next mini-game, and so on and so forth. The world needs more quality multiplayer console games, and Mario hasn't shown his pudgy face in two years. But he's throwing a party soon, and we're all invited!

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PIKACHU JET!

A Almost as rare as the Gold & Silver versions of...

...GB Pocket Monster itself, we finally managed to track down the Pocket Monster plane at Haneda Airport, Tokyo. This highly sought after flight is almost impossible to get on, due to such high demand. Every child in Japan wants to ride on this plane, not least of all because of the limited-edition PM goods you can receive. However, without the special golden PM boarding pass, you'll just have to enjoy the view from the outside like everyone else.



EIDOS SHOW THEIR WAREZ

It's not often we can place a face with the talent behind video game making. Showcasing their auspicious lineup for the holiday season and well beyond, Eidos gave the gaming press a chance to mingle with the likes of John Romero, whose *Daikatana* was one of the key titles on display for the intimate, one-day gathering. Of course, *Tomb Raider 3* was shown in near-finished form, looking better than ever in its invaluable hi-res mode. But don't for a second write Eidos off as the Lara Croft-only company: a number of games – most notably the highly ambitious, fantastic-looking *Omakron* under development in France – are poised to impress many gamers in the coming months.

VM LABS NAME THEIR CHILD!

F For a long time now, rumors and speculation have been flying concerning the "Project X" technology developed by...

...a U.S. company, VM Labs. For many, it was seen as a possible fourth contender in the next-gen video games race, and now it appears that the hardware is actually becoming reality rather than just dreamy announcements. VM Labs has officially named the product "Nuon," and according to CEO Richard Miller, "the name NUON reflects the wide-reaching power of a technology capable of introducing millions of consumers to interactive entertainment through their television sets." Bold words indeed, but it would appear that the Nuon is following a similar route to that of the ill-fated 3DO, in that the system will not just be a single machine made by one company (like the PlayStation or Nintendo 64). Nuon will feature DVD, Internet and multimedia capabilities, therefore making it more appealing and viable for a wider audience. At least that's the plan...

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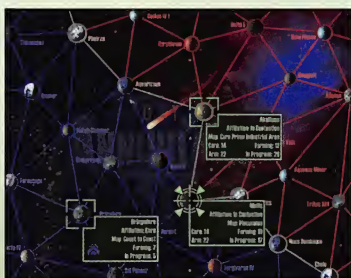


ANNIHILATE EVERYBODY

W While it's hard to deny the popularity behind *Total Annihilation*, it did have one problem...

...that has finally been fixed: Cave Dog have launched their own proprietary on-line server, Boneyards. Similar to Battle.net, this is a meeting area for TA players to find others who hunger for battle. Unique to this experience is Cave's epic *Galactic Wars* subsidiary game, which lets you team up with fellow *Core* or *Arm* players and conquer the universe. This service will undoubtedly be a god-send for those looking forward to TA: *Kingdoms*.

© 1998 CAVE DOG



POCKET FULL OF SHELLS...

I It may not be Dreamcast, but it is new hardware! The Neo Geo Pocket has arrived and so far everybody at...

...GR loves the surprisingly compact portable. Our first three games – *King of Fighters R1*, *Neo Geo Cup '98*, and *Pocket Tennis* – have been played to death. What do we think? They're great! O.K., so *Tennis* is a tiny 4-meg game with simplistic graphics that our serious gamers have avoided. Well, our lady gamers dig it. *King of Fighters R1*, however, is awesome! This hard hittin' 16-meg wonder has surprisingly crisp graphics and excellent animation. Mai even bounces, with multiple frames! The control is excellent, too, and the Pocket's fantastic micro-switchy pad cranks out fireballs like a mo' fo! Finally, *Neo Geo Cup '98* is a great link-up game that's easy to pick up for a quick game with a buddy.

What really excites us, though, is the Neo Geo Pocket's Dreamcast compatibility. As demonstrated in this picture, the Pocket will act as an extensive VM-type memory accessory when connected to the Dreamcast with a special cable adapter. Manage DC memory, access special functions with SNK games... the possibilities are endless!



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Jeff Gordon XS Racing Arrives March 1999

WILD SPECULATION! SONY'S 'NEXT' MOVE REVEALED!

In a purely rumor-based scenario, we can shed some light on Sony's new PlayStation 2 super console. Speculation is heating up because...

...Sony have recently officially announced a new "Signal Processor/RISC Microcontroller" chip they say will be used in a forthcoming home video game system. Hmm... I wonder what *that* could be? The chip has been clocked running at 250MHz, using RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) architecture, and includes a built-in MPEG2 decoder. This wouldn't even be the main CPU for the PSX2, so just imagine what the power of that beast will be! Back to the rumors. A certain Mr. Kenji Eno let it slip that Sony will announce the machine on December 3 of this year (the fourth anniversary of the PSX), and the rest goes like this:

- PSX2 will launch on Friday, December 3, 1999
- It will cost around ¥23,800
- It is DVD-ROM based (presumably allowing you to watch movies as well)
- It will be capable of shifting around 20 million polygons per second! (Dreamcast can do 3-4 million per second)
- It will be able to play all original PSX1 games, and use all the peripherals (memory cards, dual shock pads, etc.)

Not bad, eh? Oh, and one final word. The new PSX2 SPU has approximately 10.5 million transistors on board, compared with Pentium II's current 7.5 million. Bring it on next year, and Sega, don't start to cry just yet... This is all rumor, after all.



TWISTED METAL OR TWISTED GAMER?

On Thursday, October 29, 989 Studios invited Gamers' Republic into the bustling heart of Los Angeles...

...to partake in a rather unique event to celebrate the upcoming release of *Twisted Metal 3*. Dave Rees, editor at *GR*, was given a Sweet Tooth mask and full control of the insane clown's ice cream truck! The truck, of course, had little to do with supplying eager children with ice cream. Flanked by forward-pointing machine guns, surrounded by purple and yellow fur, armed with a generous allotment of bombs, and equipped with an awesome stereo system, Rees barreled around corners, weaved in and out of traffic, cleared sidewalks, and taunted the weary public with loud music, bomb-throwing gestures and harsh words. Needless to say, the 989 folks were a bit worried as he entered the posh streets of Beverly Hills.



N64 IN ARCADES?

In cooperation with Nintendo Co. Ltd., Seta Corporation has developed ALECK 64, an arcade system using technology from the Nintendo 64 home video game system. It is equipped with a motherboard, ROM cassette, and a special joystick, and is capable of running a wide range of new arcade video games. Unveiled at the AM Show last September, this low-cost arcade kit will allow companies to easily create arcade games for N64 conversion. The first games will be as follows:

ELEVEN BEAT World Tournament
STAR SOLDIER Vanishing Earth



The first original title is called **VIVID DOLLS**. It's an adult entertainment game where you can choose from eight differently dressed beauties. By surrounding the mosaic pattern field, the image of a naked Vivid Doll is revealed.

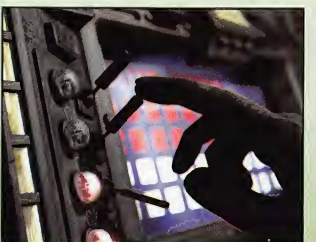
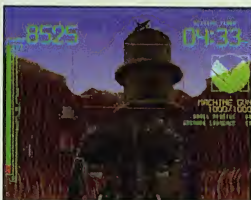
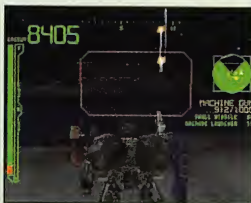
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(C) 1998 SETA, (C) 1998 VISCO

FINALLY! HARD-CORE 'CORE SEQUEL

From Software plan to continue their cool Armored Core series with Master of Arena. More of a true sequel as opposed to the update...

...that was *Project Phantasma*, MoA will introduce a more complex story, an even greater variety of mech parts and upgrades, and an updated engine. The seldom-used link mode returns, along with dual shock compatibility. The most exciting news, however, is the game's supposed use of Sony's soon-to-be ubiquitous PocketStation, though exactly in what capacity is still unknown. Presumably, you'll be able to battle and trade mechs through the little 32-bit portable. Japanese release is slated for March next year.

All images © 1998 From Software





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YOU ARE SUPERMAN



GAME BOY



GAMEBOY COLOR ARRIVES AT GR!

Not being able to wait – as usual – Gameboy Colors from Japan quickly made their way into...

...our willing hands this past September. The new unit, which has twice the processing power and four times the RAM of the original, is able to produce spectacular 16-bit-style effects (like deep parallax scrolling), and the nagging ghosting effect that plagued the old black-and-white unit is now a thing of the past. The graphics are notably sharper as well, and the colors are surprisingly vibrant. In other words, this is like a whole new GameBoy! As usual, though, one fly has met with the proverbial ointment. Without a light attachment, the GBC is very hard to see unless you're in very bright light. You literally have to purchase a lighting device with your unit. Try and find one that doesn't reflect the bulbs off the screen. Adding limited and varying degrees of color, the GBC plays all of the old black and white games, but the first game to actually utilize the new hardware will be *Smurfs' Nightmare*, which is reviewed on page 87. If more companies follow suit and take advantage of the new GBC's capabilities, the GameBoy legacy may live on well past its recent 10-year anniversary.

GameBoy Color games coming soon...

© 1998 NINTENDO



Gallery



Gex 3D



Link's Awakening



Quest For Camelot



Montezuma's Revenge



Men In Black



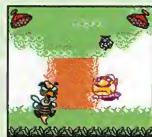
Rats



Rugrats



Tetris



Wario Land II

SWAN DIVE!!! BANDAI BANZAI!!!!

Portable gaming's second world war has begun, and Bandai has already taken a powerful initiative with...

...their new portable 16-bit system, the Wonderswan. Nintendo have GB Color and SNK have Neo Geo Pocket, but neither enjoy the support of Bandai's Wonderswan. So far all of these powerhouses are committed to producing games for the upcoming portable: Konami, Capcom, Square, Namco, Jaleco, Taito, Atlus, ASCII, and many more. Sega is talking with Bandai regarding Dreamcast compatibility, but the company seems to be more interested in piggy-backing Sega's distribution channels in over 5000 retail stores across Japan. This would be a business agreement more than a merger. Newly revealed features of the Wonderswan include B&W FMV (as demonstrated in the shot to the right), and a maximum cart size of 128 megabits! That's *huge* for a portable! With this much support and massive marketing, as well as sure fire hits like *Gundam* and *Puyo Puyo*, the industry's next big portable may be here...

© 1998 BANDAI



NEW MEDIA DEVICE FOR PSX2

Sony and Fujitsu announced that they have co-developed a 3.5-inch magnetic optical disk (MO) called GIGAMO that can store more than 1.3 GB of information and transfer data at a rate of 5.92 MB per second. Devices using this format will be shipped in spring of 1999 as an alternative media for digital video storage. Sony wants to market GIGAMO aggressively the world over and speculation is that Sony may adopt this new format for PlayStation 2.

SCE AMERICA IS PRETTY HAP!

As a result of reduction in price from \$149 to \$129 on August 30, the monthly sales of PlayStation increased 97% in September. According to TRSTS, the total number of units sold in the States was more than 3,805,000, which is more than the combined sales of Saturn and Nintendo 64. In addition, the market share of PlayStation has increased to 66% in September. How much longer will Sony be allowed to dominate?

RPG SAVES LIVES

Recent studies conducted by the Stanford University Medical Center...

...and Kaiser Permanente show that patients aged 8 to 16 who sampled *Packy & Marlon*, a role-playing sim designed to teach young people about diabetes self-management, reduced their urgent care visits by 77 percent over a six-month period. Patients received a Super Nintendo game system to take home and were randomly assigned to receive either *Packy & Marlon* (group of 31) or an entertainment video game with no health-related content (group of 28). They were instructed to play their game as much as they wanted, as long as they followed guidelines about using interactive games at home. Children in the treatment group improved in communication regarding diabetes with friends and caregivers. They also gained in self-efficacy in relation to choosing the proper foods to eat, using insulin as prescribed, and dealing with diabetes-related emergencies.

WORLD WARRIORS

The World Championship Street Fighter Alpha 3 tournament took place...

...recently (November 7-8) at Nickel City in San Jose, CA. Over sixty competitors played double-elimination games in order to separate the wheat from the chaff. Top players from all around the U.S. turned out in the hope of taking the title of World Champion from the rather aloof No.1 Japanese (unbeaten) player, Daigo Sukuzama. Sukuzama is also No.1 at *SFA2* and *SF3 2nd Impact*. The final top five rankings looked like this: **1 - Alex Valle (personal friend of GR's and No.1 all-round SF player in the U.S.), 2 - Graham Wolfe, 3 - Jason Cole, 4 - Jason Nelson, 5 - John Choi**

Alex Valle (U.S.) won the tournament and qualified for a shot at the title. The players chose the following characters: **Daigo Sukuzama** uses **V-Akuma**, **Alex Valle** uses **V-Ryu**.

In a crowd-pleasing move, Alex Valle took the first set of rounds, only to be beaten twice in a row by Daigo. At one stage it seemed possible, and both sets were extremely close, but in the end the Japanese champ retained his title. As a closing event, the top five U.S. players played the champ in an exhibition, to see just how well the others would have performed. The champ slapped down everyone, except Graham Wolfe, who managed to take Daigo down finally (albeit with a few pixels of energy remaining). Well done, Mr. Valle, who won the following: *Alpha 3* arcade game, \$1000, DS PlayStation, and *Rival Schools*.



ABOVE: SF Kings of the World- Alex on the left and Daigo on the right

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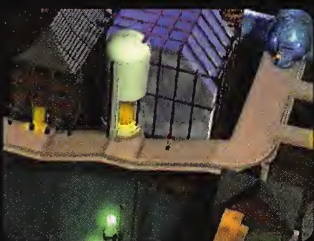


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database

YOUR NUMBER ONE SOURCE FOR TOP SELLING CONSOLE AND COMPUTER GAME STATS



top ten best selling playstation titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1998



- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 MADDEN '99 ELECTRONIC ARTS | 6 NFL BLITZ MIDWAY |
| 2 NFL GAMEDAY '99 SONY | 7 GRAN TURISMO NAMCO |
| 3 PARASITE EVE SQUARESOFT | 8 SPYRO THE DRAGON SONY |
| 4 WWF WARZONE MIDWAY | 9 TWISTED METAL 2 989 STUDIOS |
| 5 CRASH BANDICOOT SONY | 10 NCAA FOOTBALL '99 EA |

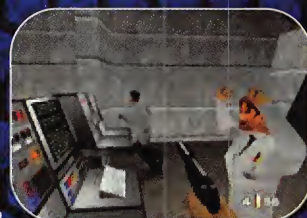
Football dominates the PlayStation charts this month, but Square's latest release proves RPGs are still high on gamers' lists.

top ten best selling nintendos4 titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1998

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 GOLDENEYE 007 NINTENDO | 6 NASCAR '99 EA |
| 2 WWF WARZONE ACCLAIM | 7 WCW vs. NWO THQ |
| 3 BANJO-KAZOOIE NINTENDO | 8 SUPER MARIO 64 NINTENDO |
| 4 NFL BLITZ MIDWAY | 9 MARIO KART 64 NINTENDO |
| 5 MADDEN NFL '99 EA | 10 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE OCEAN |

For the umpteenth time since its release, GoldenEye 007 (at the new low price) once again shoves its way to the top, dethroning the mighty Warzone.



top ten best selling saturn titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1998



- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 CROC: LEGEND OF GOBBOS FOX | 6 MADDEN NFL '98 ELECTRONIC ARTS |
| 2 SHINING FORCE 3 SEGA | 7 FIGHTING VIPERS SEGA |
| 3 TOMB RAIDER EIDOS | 8 SONIC 3D BLAST SEGA |
| 4 PANZER DRAGON SAGA SEGA | 9 DARIUS GAIDEN ACCLAIM |
| 5 NASCAR '98 ELECTRONIC ARTS | 10 MADDEN '97 ELECTRONIC ARTS |

Attention K-Mart shoppers! Lower those prices and Croc fans come out of the woodwork! At \$14.99, Croc takes a bite out of the charts!

top ten best selling pc titles

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1998

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 RAINBOW SIX RED STORM ENT. | 6 R.M. TROPHY HUNTER WW |
| 2 DUNE 2000 WESTWOOD STUDIOS | 7 CABELA'S B.G.H. HEAD GAMES |
| 3 DEER HUNTER WIZARDWORKS | 8 LEGO ISLAND MINDSCAPE |
| 4 STARCRAFT BLIZZARD STUDIOS | 9 MYST BRODERBUND |
| 5 TITANIC CYBERFLIX | 10 DIABLO BLIZZARD |

Starcraft is finally knocked out of the top spot this month by a combo of long-awaited titles, Rainbow Six and Dune 2000.



top ten overall console

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD SEPTEMBER 1998



- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 MADDEN '99-ps EA | 6 WWF WARZONE-n64 ACCLAIM |
| 2 NFL GAMEDAY '99-ps 989 STUDIOS | 7 BANJO-KAZOOIE-n64 NINTENDO |
| 3 PARASITE EVE-ps SQUARESOFT | 8 NFL BLITZ-ps MIDWAY |
| 4 GOLDENEYE 007-n64 NINTENDO | 9 GRAN TURISMO-ps SONY |
| 5 WWF WARZONE-ps ACCLAIM | 10 SPYRO THE DRAGON-ps SONY |

world republic top ten games



japan



- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 MSH vs. STREET FIGHTER SS | 6 POCKET MONSTERS: PIC GB |
| 2 SLAYERS PS | 7 DQ MONSTERS GBC |
| 3 BEAT MANIA PS | 8 SAMPAGUITA PS |
| 4 TALE OF MARS PS | 9 SIMPLE 1500 SERIES VOL. 1 PS |
| 5 WARIO LAND 2 GBC | 10 METAL GEAR SOLID PS |

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD THE 2ND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 1998

united kingdom



- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 COLIN McRAE RALLY PS | 6 ISS PRO '98 PS |
| 2 F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX N64 | 7 ODDWORLD: PLATINUM PS |
| 3 TOCA PS | 8 GRAN TURISMO PS |
| 4 TEKKEN 3 PS | 9 MEDIEVIL PS |
| 5 1080° SNOWBOARDING N64 | 10 PREMIER MANAGER PS |

RANKED ON UNITS SOLD THE 2ND WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 1998

gamers' republic top ten games

BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH NOVEMBER 7



d. halverson



- | | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 1 TONIC TROUBLE | N64/PC |
| 2 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 3 BRAVE FENCER | PS |
| 4 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 5 SILICON VALLEY | N64 |
| 6 MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH | SS |
| 7 MESSIAH | PC |
| 8 WARIO LAND 2 | GBP |
| 9 KNIGHT & BABY | PS |
| 10 BODY HARVEST | N64 |



d. hodgson



- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1 SIN | PC |
| 2 SHOGO | PC |
| 3 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 4 BEAT MANIA | PS |
| 5 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 6 CAST. BLOODLINES | GEN |
| 7 QUAKE 2 | PC |
| 8 SAM. SHODOWN 2 | NG |
| 9 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 10 BRIAN LARA CRICKET | PC |



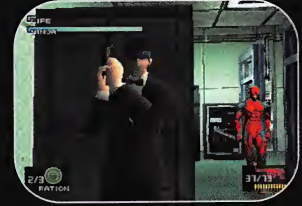
b. siechter



- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 2 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 3 XENOGears | PS |
| 4 RADIANT SILVERGUN | SS |
| 5 DRACULA X | PS |
| 6 ROLLAWAY | PS |
| 7 PUZZLE FIGHTER | SS |
| 8 MSH vs. SF | PS |
| 9 SCARS | N64 |
| 10 NIGHTMARE CREATURES | N64 |



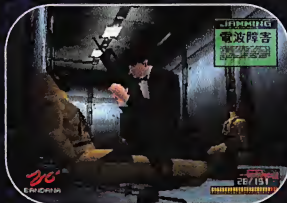
d. rees



- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 2 ZELDA 64 | N64 |
| 3 MYTH 2 | PC |
| 4 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 5 SIN | PC |
| 6 HALF-LIFE | PC |
| 7 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 8 FALLOUT 2 | PC |
| 9 TRESPASSER | PC |
| 10 GRIM FANDANGO | PC |



m. hobbs



- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 2 XENOGears | PS |
| 3 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 4 K.O.F. R-1 | NEO-GEO POCKET |
| 5 MSH vs. SF | SS |
| 6 DESTREGA | PS |
| 7 ROLL AWAY | PS |
| 8 C. WARS VENGEANCE | PS |
| 9 STRIKERS 1945 II | PS |
| 10 FORMULA ONE '98 | PS |



m. griffin



- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| 1 PANZER SAGA | SS |
| 2 DESTREGA | PS |
| 3 CASTLEVANIA BLOODLINES | GEN |
| 4 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 5 GRANDIA | SS |
| 6 XENOGears | PS |
| 7 RECOIL | PC |
| 8 ONE | PS |
| 9 R-TYPE DELTA | PS |
| 10 TWISTED METAL 3 | PS |



r. lockhart



- | | |
|---------------------|----|
| 1 SONIC ADVENTURE | DC |
| 2 MYTH 2 | PC |
| 3 GRIM FANDANGO | PC |
| 4 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 5 FALCOM CLASSICS 2 | SS |
| 6 LUNAR 2 | SS |
| 7 XENOGears | PS |
| 8 TRESPASSER | PC |
| 9 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 10 BEAT MANIA | PS |



b. williams



- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 2 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 3 XENOGears | PS |
| 4 MSH vs. SF | SS |
| 5 ROGUE SQUADRON | N64 |
| 6 GRIM FANDANGO | PS |
| 7 POKEMON (BLUE) | CGB |
| 8 WARIO LAND 2 | CGB |
| 9 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 10 BEAT MANIA | PS |

Since the advent of 3D graphics, it has been rare that a game review, professional or otherwise, would conclude without mentioning the game's framerate. But despite the ubiquity and importance of this topic, there is still a tremendous amount of confusion surrounding nearly every aspect of framerates, starting with what a framerate actually means. This confusion arises in large part because of how strange NTSC (the U.S. television standard) is. However, it's confusing enough without bringing the NTSC standard into the discussion, so we'll start with a few basic ideas that apply to any situation.

First, there are three different concepts that can all affect how smooth a game looks, but which are actually quite different: refresh rate, redraw rate (what is typically called framerate), and frames of animation. What gets particularly confusing is that "frames" can refer to any of these, but once you are aware of the ambiguity, the meaning is generally clear from context. **Refresh rate** is the speed at which the monitor or TV actually redraws the screen. This depends on the monitor or TV, and has nothing to do with how fast a game is (although most monitors support a variety of refresh rates). Even if the framerate is faster than the refresh rate, the image will only update on the screen as fast as the refresh rate.

a game is being updated 30 times per second: it's constantly and smoothly drawing background scrolling or 3D aspects, but if the characters (or other animated parts) have a motion that takes one second but only has 10 frames of animation, this discrepancy will become noticeable.

Now, to make matters worse, when playing video games on a television, the situation is complicated by the idiosyncrasies of the NTSC standard. In essence, a television redraws the screen at 60 Hz (Hz simply means "times per second"), but with the caveat that it is actually drawing in interlaced mode: that is, it will draw every other horizontal line of one picture, and then draw a second picture whose lines are placed between the lines of the first. Therefore, the actual effect is somewhere between having a refresh rate of 60 Hz and 30 Hz; it can provide a faster refresh rate than normal 30 Hz would, but flickers more than a monitor refreshing 60 times per second. Each part of the interlaced picture is called a field; the total picture is called a frame; hence, a television refreshes at 60 fields per second, but only 30 frames per second, since it uses interlacing to make a complete frame out of two fields.

draw 30 (interlaced) high-resolution frames per second, which flicker noticeably. Things get stranger when it comes to console games running at 60 frames per second: high-resolution games will typically only end up drawing half of each frame, since each field can only display half of a high-resolution frame.

To address one more common confusion before adjourning for the month, it is a common misconception that the human eye can't distinguish anything faster than 30 frames per second. This is incorrect; 60 frames per second is noticeably smoother than 30 frames per second. The misperception arises because 30 frames per second is about where the human eye can no longer distinguish individual frames, and the illusion of motion becomes convincing. However, this does not mean that the illusion isn't more convincing if the framerate is a solid 60 Hz. That said, people have a habit of drastically overestimating their ability to measure framerates; for a genre that doesn't involve a lot of quick motion, 20 frames per second is very acceptable. If anyone looks at a game and tells you that they're disappointed that it's only running at 30 frames per second, you should take that with a grain of salt; the

FRAMERATES

By Brian Osseman

The **redraw rate** is the rate at which the game redraws the screen. This is the most variable factor, since it frequently changes substantially even as a game is being played – the phenomenon commonly called "slowdown." This occurs in response to how much work a game has to do in drawing each frame, which can change a lot depending on many factors, including how much is being displayed on the screen: the more it has to draw (either in 2D or 3D), the longer it will take to do it, and the lower the redraw rate will be.

Finally, the number of **frames of animation** can also affect how smooth a game looks. This is often only a factor where at least some 2D sprites are concerned, since 3D models can and generally do store extremely high numbers of frames of animation without using up very much memory at all. However, games which either use entirely 2D graphics or use sprites for some parts (like *Doom* did) can look jerky if the animated parts don't have enough frames of animation. For instance, let's say



Taking a look at a couple of games featured in this issue, we have the smooth, 60 fps action of Roll Away on the left to compare to the below-30- and sometimes below-15-fps Tiny Tank on the right. With its simple playfield, it's easy for Roll Away to maintain a high FPS, whereas Tiny Tank struggles with rendering a large environment and several poly models.

Unlike monitors, a television's resolution is fixed: it can do about 250 lines per redraw, or 500 interlaced lines. Games handle this in different ways: a 30 fps (frames per second) game can run in low resolution and avoid the flicker entirely by drawing the same field twice to create a low resolution frame, which changes 30 times per second. A 30 fps high-resolution game can draw the odd scanlines of each frame in the first field, and the even scanlines on the second field, allowing it to

chances are excellent that either it's significantly slower than that, or that it looks completely smooth and the estimate is baseless. At the end of the day, all that matters is that the framerate is fast enough that the game creates a convincing illusion for you, and you shouldn't let pedants try to ruin your fun.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR TOPICS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE COVERED, PLEASE E-MAIL: TECHFRONT@GAMERSREPUBLIC.COM.

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FOR N64



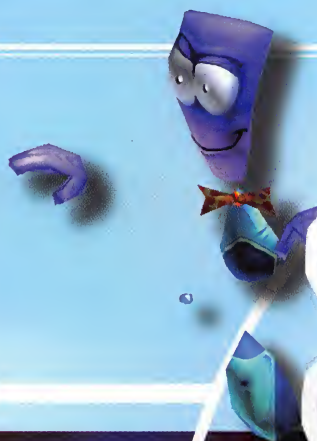
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With all that has transpired since the PlayStation and Nintendo 64 were introduced – all the realistic simulations, epic role-playing games, life-like adventures starring big-breasted women, real sports, and fighters a plenty – I continue to derive

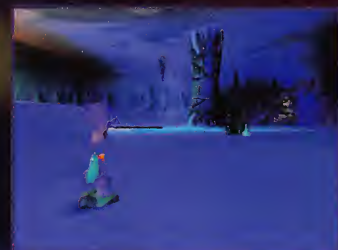
my most memorable moments from the wackier side of gaming. Like most obsessions, I thought my affinity for critters would eventually pass, but my love for games of this nature continues to deepen. The first time I saw Ed's funny head and heard his weepy plea I knew that Ubisoft were onto something great – something that deserved to be put in the spotlight. And so the unlikely of char-

acters proudly graces the cover of this month's *Gamers Republic* – and we're glad to have him.

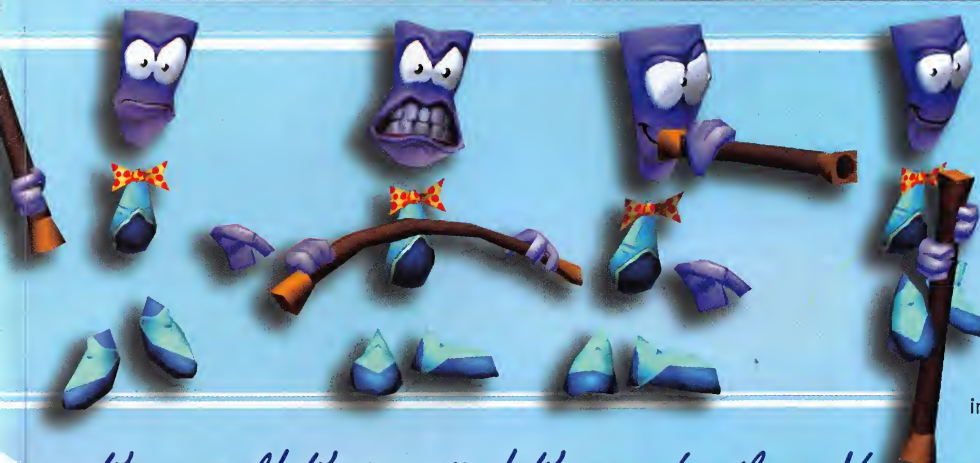
Creating a celebrated 3D action/platform/adventure is no easy task. Many ingredients must go into the mix, and if even one is lacking in the slightest, it can disrupt the entire proceedings – which is why so few surface each year. *Tonic Trouble* has been in some form of development for about three years, and only now is it ready to charm the pants off its audience. The essential elements are all in place, save some minor issues with assorted physics inherent in our not-quite-final version; otherwise, the following components are all present and accounted for.



Below left, a stunningly picturesque cavern opens before Ed. And, at right, when Ed eats popcorn (he seems to prefer Newman's Own) watch out! The little bugger goes hulk-o-mania and can bend solid steel or swat down the fiercest rivals!



All screens on this spread are from the Nintendo 64 version!



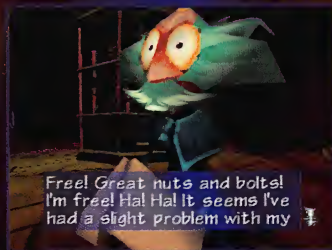
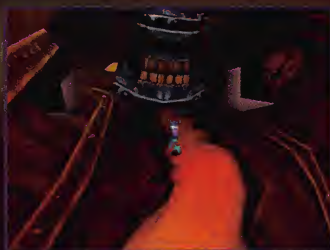
First, and most essentially, you need a great character, and Ed is a delightful one, full of spirit and wonder. He's fun to control and very reactive to situations. Ed gets hot, cold, happy, sad, tired, and reacts to many given predicaments differently. Like Rayman, he has no limbs, only a torso, head, feet and hands – traits UbiSoft introduced with *Rayman* and are now becoming famous for. This composition allows for extremely fluid motion and precise collision. Ed's big, long head is full of expression as he goes through his many motions. He's cute enough to hug, yet cunning and feisty enough to swat down his foe – a perfect combination. He can direct platforms, hang and shuffle, slide on a disc, use a blow pipe, attack with a stick while running and jumping, swim, wade, pogo stick, fly, become "Super Ed," and even go chameleon! A lowly janitor who's accidentally mutated an entire planet, he's the cause of all of the mayhem surrounding him, but the real reason he's serving out this sentence is the oldest one in the book: The little guy's in love.

*It's original! It's innovative! It's more fun than a Veg-o-matic!
It's UbiSoft's Tonic Trouble and you're gonna' love it!*

TONIC TROUBLE

BY DAVE HALVERSON

Demonstrating five aspects of Tonic Trouble's deep gameplay, here's Ed riding a lift, cruisin' a cliff, being chased, conversing with the doc, and lifting himself up. Ed does so much for a guy with no arms and legs, it's amazing! By the way, how would they ever make an Ed action figure?



Free! Great nuts and bolts!
I'm free! Hal Hal! It seems I've
had a slight problem with my

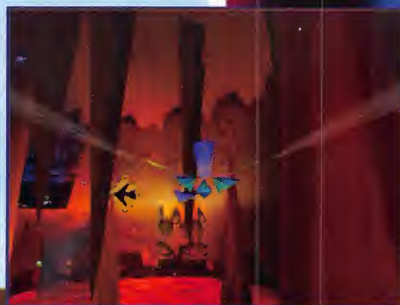
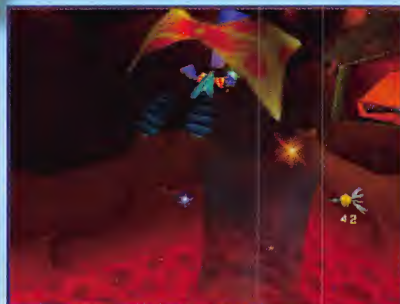
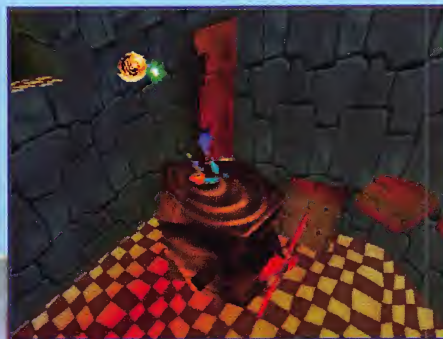
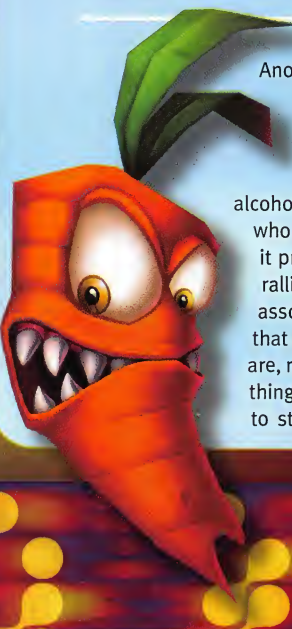
Next, you need a universe to unfurl the adventure in, preferably one as far removed from any previous incarnations as possible, which is no easy task considering the limited elements that make up a video game environment. This is where the *Tonic* team truly shines. A world where everything on the surface from veggies to sheep has mutated into some form of hideous creep, the settings (which include canyons, caverns, caves, tunnels, slides, vast rooms and dungeons, and color-cycling rivers) have an amazingly distinct look and art style; the designers have copied no one in creating the mutated planet. The integrity of the textures is unprecedented (except for perhaps *Banjo's*) for the N64, and there is no fog in sight, allowing you to see vast stretches of the landscape before you. Like pages of a comic book, you never know what lies ahead, but it's always breathtaking and full of possibility.

Time to add enemies!

Another key feature, you'll need lots of little baddies protecting one really big nasty one. Here again, the designers at Ubi deliver. The once penniless, alcoholic marauder, Grogh the Hellish, who sips the intergalactic broth (after it practically lands on his head), has rallied the mutant veggies and other assorted freaks around him to assure that he can keep things the way they are, regardless of Ed's attempt to clean things up. And so in fear of returning to stews everywhere, the plants and

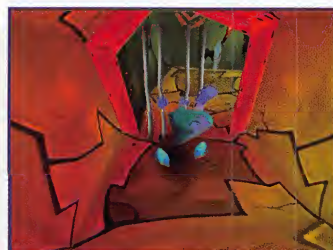
animals alike (along with anything else that happened to be lying around) have laid some hideous traps for Ed on his quest to return the planet to its prior state and get back home.

Once all of this grandeur has been achieved (and it has), it's up to the game's 3D engine to make it all flow. As we all know, the best-laid plans can be negated by choppy frame rates, fog, and poor collision – afflictions the N64 is very susceptible to. *Tonic's* engine is superb for both versions (PC and N64). Ubi's proprietary 3D integration tool named Architecture Commune Programming (ACP) puts creative control in the hands of the designers rather than the programmers, which results in an overall heightened experience in terms of interaction and complexity, across the boards.



Tonic Trouble on PC...

In my past *Tonic Trouble* coverage, I've focused mainly on the PC version (pictured here), not by choice, mind you, but because Nintendo ROMs are harder to come by than gold discs. In the end, I am shocked at how splendid *Tonic* looks on the N64, but there is no denying that this is one beautiful PC game. Too bad there's not a swingin' gun or troops to command and build stuff for... it'd sell a trillion!





The crowning jewel for any critter-based adventure/platformer is the gameplay. There's nothing worse than getting a game home to discover it's comprised of nothing more than level after level of beating stuff to death. Monotony can kill just about any game. *Tonic Trouble's* gameplay is highly unpredictable, full of surprises, rich in puzzle and platform elements, and just plain fun. Platform fans that crave those long-lost timing jumps and lengthy, pattern-based scenarios are in luck. *Tonic Trouble* runneth over with some 40 hours of constantly evol-

ing gameplay that requires precision as well as intellect to conquer. And, finally, in terms of music and sound effects, I was shocked to hear the quality of audio they have achieved on the N64, given that this game looks so beautiful. So many 64 games of late have spewed earplug-inducing melodies, usually including the dreaded trademark guitar lick from the dark side heard in every wrestling game intro on the planet. *Tonic's* music is a mixture of moody melodies that rise and sink with the nature of the game, and all of the effects are clear and realistic, adding to the feel measurably.

As I'm sure you've gathered by now, I'm pretty happy with *Tonic Trouble* and am highly recommending it. Both versions set one or more new standards for their respective platforms and are at the very least incredibly inventive and entertaining pieces of software. Here's to the PC version finding its way to the Dreamcast! Cheers! ⚡



Who is Ed, and why is he here?

You'll find out on the next page. In the meantime, here are some examples of the many faces of Ed. Top left and right (from the PC version) don't drown Ed (that would be the shot on the left), and see Ed slide down the hill (the first thing you do in the game, and man, is it fun). Below (from the N64 version) Ed gets-a-little from the doc's daughter for continuing.



an interview with ubisoft's greg gobbi

I had a great time playing Tonic for this cover story. I only wish I'd have had more time with the games. But this being the cover story, we waited till the last few days to get the most recent versions. So, in order to answer any remaining questions you may have, here's the skinny from Team Tonic!

GR: AFTER THE SUCCESS OF RAYMAN ACROSS THREE PLATFORMS, WHAT PROMPTED THE CREATION OF ED AND TONIC TROUBLE BEFORE A SEQUEL?

Greg: We wanted to do something totally different after *Rayman*. In the beginning, *Tonic Trouble* was like a new big bang in our brains: everything was to be created. A new universe, new characters, thousands of twisted ideas that we had when producing *Rayman* and that we did not put in *Rayman* because they did not fit with the spirit of the game. It was amazing.

I suppose we felt like any creator on Day One: what will we create today? What about light? Ok, let's go for light! Tomorrow will be Day 2.

We needed to create something else before going on with *Rayman*. Nobody in the team felt like becoming civil workers, capitalizing all our life on our first success. I think that if we had made *Rayman 2* just after *Rayman*, *Rayman 2* would only have been a sequel instead of the really huge creation it is and we wouldn't have made this amazing and totally twisted adventure game that *Tonic Trouble* is.

WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND ED? HOW WAS HE CONCEIVED AND BY WHO?

The original idea we had was about the evolution of the character during the storyline. We wanted Ed to be an absolute nobody, a wannabe, a loser at the beginning of the adventure and a maxi-mega-superstar, super hero, savior of our souls at the end. Ed is an anti-hero (like all of us) that turns himself into a hero (like in all our wishes). Ed was originally "delivered" by Michel Ancel (the creator of *Rayman*) and received his education from all of us. To be honest, this guy did not receive what I would call a classical education. That may be why he is twisted, schizophrenic, completely clueless about reality and the way you should behave in society.

We have included a psychological analysis of Ed

allow to de-multiply creativity. Before, designers used to order a character to engineers, engineers would program its behavior, which was integrated as such in the game. This did not allow the behavior to be rich enough. The development of our tools allows today to have 35 people looking for new ideas, developing them and evaluating the gameplay in real time.

Let's talk about figures:

- developers: 60
- animators: 30
- level designers: 12
- 3D artists: 12
- sound designer: 1
- musician: 1
- sound effects: 2

SHIFTING GEARS FROM 2D HAND-DRAWN GRAPHICS TO 3D, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Keeping the expression and the emotion of the characters. Our characters are very cartoonish and fun. We decided that they would express their personalities through their actions (versus facial expression). So we kept this fun with the movements of the characters. *Tonic Trouble* is full of hilarious animations. We have bodybuilding guards dancing on the ice with a very nice pink tutu, we have boxing mushrooms, angry carrots, revolutionary corns...

WHAT IS YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL FOR ED?

We know Ed has strong potential as a character. *Tonic Trouble* is the first appearance of Ed. He is very impressive (you know, he is quite a shy guy) even if he knows that he is a good actor. We have the same hope: To win an Academy Award!

DO YOU THINK THE PC DEMOGRAPHIC HAS COME FAR ENOUGH TO EMBRACE A FULL-BLOWN CONSOLE PLATFORMER?

Actually, *Rayman* already proved this for UbiSoft. It was a massive success on PlayStation, but also on PC, thanks to the great gameplay and a universal character. We are very confident that *Tonic* will set up a new reference on PC as well.

WAS TONIC TROUBLE DESIGNED FOR PC AND THEN SHOE-HORNED INTO THE N64, OR HAVE BOTH GAMES TAKEN

I think so. We received very good support from Nintendo of America. They believed in the title, as did Mr. Miyamoto. So they have been very available to help us. We received a lot of hints from them.

THE OPENING CINEMA FOR THE PC TITLE IS ABSOLUTELY AMAZING. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS AMAZING FOOTAGE AND DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO TAKE ED (VIA CG) INTO ANY OTHER FORMS OF MEDIA? WITH THE POPULARITY OF ANIMATED SHOWS ON FOX, MTV, AND HBO, IT SEEMS A NO-BRAINER. ED'S PRETTY DARN COOL.

The opening cinema sequence was made in Montpellier (south of France) under the direction of Michel Ancel. We received the ambition of taking our characters into other forms of media. We have some plans that I can not communicate now for Ed.

THE MUSIC ON PC IS MAJESTIC AND REALLY ADDS TO THE GAME. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST GOOD RESULTS COMPARATIVELY ON THE N64?

Yes, the music on the N64 version is really good; we kept the same spirit. Of course, it is midi (compared to Dolby Surround for the PC). But we made our own midi bank with bizarre instruments that are not in the bank provided by Nintendo. For instance, we have a banjo, a coucou, a Theremin and even a Mongolian Jalopy. If you wonder what a theremin is, listen to *Tonic's* music.

WHAT NUMBER WILL TT HAVE TO HIT TO SPAWN A SEQUEL?

We have already begun the conception of another title around Ed and his universe. It is not really a sequel but another adventure starring Ed, with a slightly different concept of gameplay.

IT SEEMS THAT THE PC VERSION OF TT, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY THE BEST PC PLATFORMER EVER, COULD BE RATHER EASILY DONE ON THE DREAMCAST. GIVEN THAT THE DC AUDIENCE WOULD LIKELY EMBRACE THE GAME TO A MUCH LARGER EXTENT, DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO PORT THE TITLE?

Well, *Tonic Trouble* is N64-exclusive for one year. That gives us some time to think about it.



from the doctor who attested that he could never join the Marines – you'll find that printed on page 120.

HOW LARGE OF A TEAM HAS UBI ALLOCATED FOR THE PROJECT?

Actually, quite a large team. This is due to the fact that *Tonic Trouble* is our first open-space 3D game. We had to make the engine. This was a big effort since we decided to make it modular, re-usable (for other games) and scalable (for all platforms). This engine was re-used (with few modifications) for *Rayman 2*, for instance. We also developed very powerful integration tools in order to offer a wide range of possibilities to level designers.

Those specific tools allow the teams of game designers and graphic designers to develop their maps and work themselves on the AI of characters and game situations. The flexibility of those tools

THEIR OWN COURSE? ARE THEY FROM THE SAME TEAM?

We made the first PC version for a bundle market in March '98. Then we made a totally new game (new levels, more characters) for the N64 and for the PC retail version. So the N64 version has been absolutely designed for the N64, by a separate team: we just kept the twisted spirit of the game and pushed it to the limits of the console.

The PC retail version has been made by taking the gameplay from the N64 version and the graphics from the bundle version.

WILL TT64 USE THE NEW 4-MEG MEMORY PAK?

We are currently looking at it. We will probably use it but I can not be absolutely positive yet.

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO TAP INTO THE N64'S HIDDEN STRENGTHS AS RARE AND IGUANA HAVE?

ON THAT NOTE, IS THE DC CAPABLE OF AN EVEN BETTER VERSION?

The first tries we made with *Tonic Trouble* on our DC kits were quite amazing.

AND, FINALLY, THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A FANTASTIC 3D ENGINE. WILL UBI SOFT CONTINUE THE TRADITION OF SUPPORTING THE EVER-POPULAR ACTION/PLATFORMER GENRE WELL INTO THE FUTURE WITH THIS ENGINE? I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULD HINT AS TO WHAT MAY BE COMING NEXT...

Of course. We are currently producing *Rayman 2* and three Playmobil titles with the same engine, plus around 15 others next year. And you are right: nothing I can tell today.

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME, AND BEST OF LUCK WITH Tonic Trouble!

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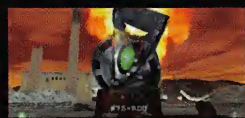
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OH, it's on!

Windows
CD-ROM





@ Dreamcast™

I've just played the future. Sure, that was a sappy intro, but it's true. This October, Sega had their public unveiling of the Dreamcast in Japan, and we were there in full force to cover the event. The following 12 pages consist of GR's first hands-on impressions of the games, along with a few new announcements. 

new challenge conference 2 the date sega fanatics will remember forever



It all started on October 6 at the Shin Shinagawa Prince in Shinagawa, Japan. It was here that Sega invited journalists worldwide to an elaborate ballroom and presented the future of their company – the Dreamcast. Speeches were made, videos were shown, surprises were announced, but the true excitement didn't begin until after the two-hour presentation finished. This was the time we were waiting for, when more than fifty TVs lining the walls of the ballroom flickered on, and controllers were plugged into the small white machines that sat in front of each and every one.

But even forgetting the playable games for a moment, it was still a memorable evening. We heard from the president of Namco, who stated that they'll be creating games early next year and are excited about the networking capabilities of the Dreamcast. The main theme to *Daimakaimura* (*Ghouls and Ghosts*) played as Capcom announced their upcoming "zombie game," and laughter echoed throughout the

building as Shiji Mikami, the man behind *Resident Evil*, walked on stage and revealed what Capcom's really working on: *Resident Evil Code: Veronica*. We heard Yu Suzuki speak about Project Berkley, the code name for the game that has been described as *Virtua Fighter RPG* (details are on page 41). We were all disappointed by the fact that *Sonic* wasn't a launch title, and thrilled by Sega's ambitious plans to put a Dreamcast in every home. It was a hectic night, a draining presentation, but a totally worthwhile event – even more so when you consider the fact that we were some of the first people in the world to have a run at the Dreamcast's software lineup.

The time we had to play the games that night was severely limited, but it didn't really matter. I tasted *Sonic Adventure* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb* and I knew just a short time later I would have ample time to play all the Dreamcast games to my heart's content – the Tokyo Game Show was just around the corner.

tokyo game show dreamcast 1101001 orange & white, sega's booth screamed of their new system

Sure, *Final Fantasy VIII* was huge, Sony had tons of curious visitors wondering about the PlayStation Pocket, and even Namco's area was packed with *Ridge Racer* fanatics. But there was little doubt about which booth was the most popular during this Fall Tokyo Game Show. Barely maneuverable on the first day of the show with only industry folks in attendance, Sega's booth became a madhouse on the public days. Imagine a solid sea of people, pushing and churning but not really getting anywhere, and you'll get a good idea of what this area looked like on the later days.

And why not? This Tokyo Game Show not only marked the public unveiling of a new system, but a new Sega System. *Virtua Fighter 3tb* and *Sonic Adventure* were playable, along with over ten other games, and the fans were there in full force.

And even if you didn't really care, Sega certainly did their best to make sure you didn't miss their baby; they had that orange spiral

plastered everywhere: huge posters adorned the walls, almost everybody carried orange bags, and even the local subway station was covered with Dreamcast banners.

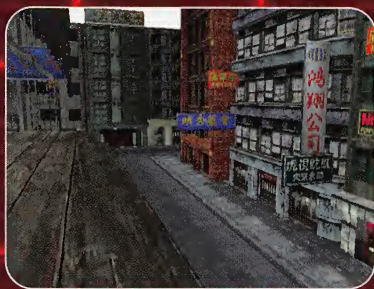
The only disappointing part was the absence of *Resident Evil Code: Veronica* and *Grandia 2*, two games which were announced a few days preceding the show. Capcom's booth didn't even mention Sega (even though they also had announced a Dreamcast version of *Power Stone* at the Conference), and there wasn't an ESP or GameArts booth to be found on the floor. The only other booths that had any major Dreamcast coverage were Uep Systems (*Coolboarders*) and Taito, who were showing off the DC version of their upcoming arcade title, *Psychic Force 2012*, behind closed doors.





virtua fighter 3tb

sega impresses even the most cynical critics with this port



We've acquired loads of information since the TGS on the latest version of VF3tb. Bear in mind that it's a launch title, so expect important last-minute changes before November 27.

One of the major concerns expressed by GR editors after the TGS was the size of VF3tb's characters: They were noticeably smaller than their arcade counterparts. Also, the resolution of the backgrounds was lower than the coin-op. You'll be pleased to hear that both of these problems have been fully rectified by the hard-working conversion team. Another issue was loading, and it's still a little longer than we would like, but the loading screen has now been stylized with subtle graphic effects that help to pass the time.

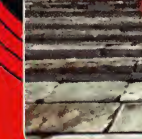
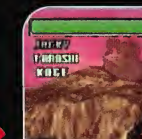
Other very specific enhancements have been made since the TGS. For example, the motion blur effect (which accompanies certain moves) was missing from the TGS version, but has now been faithfully reproduced. Similarly, the smoke and dust effects (absent at the TGS) that rise from the ground are now running perfectly.

Some idiosyncratic gameplay elements, however, have yet to be buttoned-up. When you strike opponents into the air in VF3tb, aerial combos may ensue. In the latest DC revision, the aerial and juggling combos aren't quite as continuous as the arcade game. Any dedicated VF3 player will tell you

that this needs to be addressed before the game is finalized. The good news is that the Dreamcast's Arcade Stick provides a perfect, identical experience to the arcade game. As with all of Sega's hardware and peripherals, the stick's construction is incredibly rugged. It should be able to withstand years of punishment.

Some of you may not know the major differences between the original and Team Battle version of VF3. In TB, players each choose three fighters. Like any Team Battle mode, as fighters are eliminated, the next chosen fighter steps in. In VF3tb, winning fighters not only carry over their life but they're also awarded extra life depending on the nature of the victory (ring out, time over, or straight K.O.) with a Power Recovery System.

With the recently announced delays of *Sonic Adventure*, *Rally 2* and *Blue Stinger*, DC players may have to rely on guaranteed release titles like VF3tb longer than they think. Thankfully, VF3tb is going to be one of the closest AM2 ports of all time. ✎





sonic adventure :: 1101001

the most anticipated dreamcast title was finally playable

I could start this preview the easy way – talking about how popular Sonic is, how incredible the game looks, and how much we're all looking forward to playing it at home, but frankly, that's boring. We've all heard that crap for the last four months, and, thank God, the time for hypothesizing is over – Sega finally let us in. Over the course of the Sega New Challenge Conference II and the Tokyo Game Show, I was able to play this game for hours. I sped Sonic through a futuristic city, firing through loops and sprinting down the face of a building. I used Knuckle's gliding technique to float between giant levitating rocks, utilized giant fans to propel me to higher areas, and climbed up sheer walls of stone. I raced Tails down a giant mountain on his snowboard, leaping over trees and onto secret areas of the track while being chased (or chasing) Sonic the entire time. And my God was it fun.

Sonic Adventure is truly the main reason I'm buying a Dreamcast; there's no other game like it. There are areas that, when you first experience them, will give you chills. Remember the first time you played *Panzer Dragoon*, *Ridge Racer*, or *Mario 64*? Back in the days when a system was young, there were games that forced you to stop playing every few hours, just to reflect on what you've just seen. *Sonic Adventure* is one of those titles. I was glad the courses on display were so short, because I really needed to take breaks between characters; and even though the crowds were stifling, my awe never subsided.

Yes, the courses were short. Each only took a few minutes to complete, but this can be attributed to the fact that Sega wanted as many people as they could to play their game. In an interview before the New Challenge Conference, Yuji Naka stated that the final game will not only feature the "quick" action levels we saw at the show, but longer, more involved

exploration levels. We can expect areas that will dwarf *Mario* and *Banjo* in size, feature detail far beyond either of those games could ever display, and have an interaction level unseen before in gaming.

Well, enough of the frivolities, let's get to the descriptions. On the next page, you'll see somewhat detailed accounts of what was shown at the Tokyo Game Show. And just think, mere weeks after reading this, *Sonic* will be on sale in Japan. Ain't life grand? 愛





tails



Tails's stage played more like a bonus game rather than a normal action stage. You're in a race against Sonic going down a hill, dodging rocks and trees while keeping your eyes open for jump platforms. This is great stuff, with incredible speed at times, and although there was a bit of draw-in near the end, the graphics rarely diminished. The coolest effect in the game was found here – snowflakes hitting the “camera” as you raced down hill, and unlike the white squares normally found in snowy games, these were actual flakes, shaped accordingly.

knuckles



This stage probably had the most graphical problems, but it was also the most ambitious. Set on giant rocks high in the sky, held aloft by giant propellers, you could see for miles around – and as long as you could ignore the occasional pop-up, the view was fantastic. As Knuckles, you used your gliding ability to float between these islands while battling baddies and trying not to fall off the sides. Aside from Sonic's, this stage was easily one of the most fun to play, as the amount of freedom it offered gave you warm feelings inside about the exploration levels we'll soon experience.

amy



Amy's a coward. Well, I can't really comment on her personality, but her stage was pretty much based on you running away. Even armed with a giant hammer, I found myself forced to jam forward through multiple corridors as robots gave chase. Probably the most unfinished level on display, there were quite a bit of camera issues as you turned the angle traveling through the hallways; but in seeing the superb camera work of the other levels, I'm sure this will be fixed. Amy also had a cool little bird friend that didn't seem to do much except sit on her shoulder and look cute.

sonic

Not surprisingly, this stage had the longest lines of people waiting to play. Comprised of incredibly tall buildings, floating platforms, a few rockets, and a really shiny helicopter, Sonic's futuristic city stage was easily the most impressive of the whole bunch. What starts as a journey across rooftops turns into a maddening chase through twisting ramps and loop-the-loops, and finally climaxes as you propel yourself down the side of a building. There were even a few hidden platforms only accessible if you were adept with Sonic's new spin attack, which could be used to bounce on enemies' heads across huge gaps. The entire experience was exhilarating, to say the least.



e102-r



If any stage felt the least like a *Sonic* game, this was it. Taking the role of a cumbersome (yet kind of speedy) robot, you traveled through giant caves, leaping around with your rocket thrusters. Oh yeah, and you shoot down critters with your laser gun. Your *laser gun*... what the hell?! I can't believe this game has projectile weapons... Anyway, this area had the same feeling as Knuckles', as you weren't forced to move through small passageways. Instead, the caves – complete with platforms over bubbling lava – gave you freedom to explore a bit, and seemed to offer multiple ways to exit. I have to admit, e102-r seemed a bit misplaced among the other cast members of *Sonic Adventure*, feeling more like a last-minute addition than a core character.



sonic

sonic adventure

sonic



pen pen tricolon



1101001

Ge's wacky racer thrilled many with its colorful gameplay



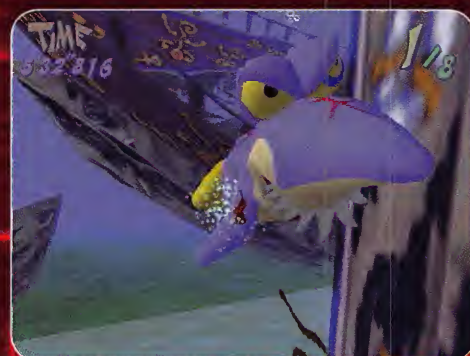
Lush with color and packed with more animation than any game deserves, the most beautiful title shown for the Dreamcast strangely enough wasn't *Sonic Adventure* or *D2*, but General Entertainment's first solo release, *PenPen Tricolon*. I'll be the first to admit that there are a few Dreamcast games that look like any Voodoo2-equipped computer could handle them (aside from *Sega Rally 2*, which is a given), but I'll challenge anyone to make that comment about *PenPen*. Never before have I seen a game look this good. Look at these shots. Now, think of the characters bouncing around, vaulting into the air and sliding around on the ground, all at a constant 60 frames per second. Rarely does the frame rate ever drop, even in the two-player mode... That's what I call programming.

There were a few people I talked to at the show who didn't like *PenPen*, and that's totally understandable. If you're expecting a *Ridge Racer*-style grand prix with feet, you've got another thing coming. Truth is, *PenPen* is slow—very slow. More like a combat racing title rather than just a dash to the finish line, the game has you trying to bump your opponents out of the way as you waddle down the track,

leaping over obstacles and watching out for traps. But in any case, it would take a hard man not to at least appreciate this game for its humor value.

It's hard not to smile when the race turns into a flummoxed mass of shape and color, with all the opponents bashing into one another, eventually landing on their butts, eyes rotating wildly. The fact is, most of the people I saw playing *PenPen* seemed to be having a great time, and I certainly joined them in this.

If it weren't for *PenPen*, there's a good chance I would have held off buying my Dreamcast until *Sonic Adventure*, but as it stands now, the launch date is going to be one hell of a fun day. ☺



→ pen pen



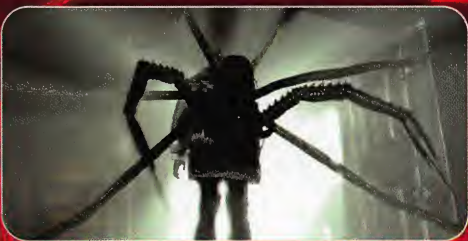
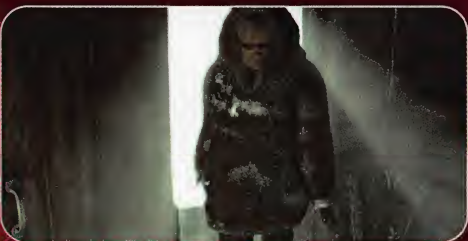


D2 : dreamcast 1101001

battle vile creatures in knee-deep snow... wearing a skirt

I had my doubts about *D2*. After seeing the M2 demo shots nearly two years ago, I was blown away, and was expecting an even better looking game when the Dreamcast version officially debuted back in May. This was not the case. Surprisingly, the main character from the original version, a sword-wielding young man who traveled through an incredibly detailed castle, was replaced by Laura (the main character of the first *D*, and according to the M2 storyline, his mother) romping through knee-deep snow wearing a skirt and sporting a submachine gun. What the hell happened? What was wrong with the game initially destined for the M2? What's with all this snow crap?

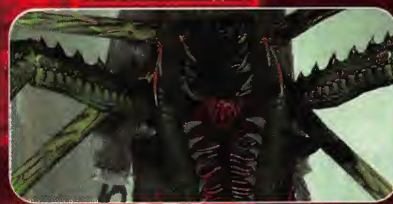
While the screenshots for the Dreamcast game didn't look terrible, the scant backgrounds (snow, mountains, snow, trees, snow, a house, etc...) and a confusing-looking battle system seemed a far cry from what



we saw back in 1996 – and aside from the stunning FMV, I was sorely disappointed. But this all changed at the Tokyo Game Show.

Strangely enough, the first officially announced game for the Dreamcast was shown only on video, and had some of the tightest “anti-videotaping” security of the entire show. The rolling demo started out on a familiar note, with Laura walking through snow, holding an Uzi. Then, scenes of her snowmobiling through thick powder began. Soon I was looking at the most animated real-time faces ever, as two polygonal characters conversed over a table, facial expressions going mad. But it was near the end of the tape that truly alerted me to Warp's power. As Laura entered a fallen plane, I was presented with an incredibly detailed vision of broken chairs, emergency air breathers hanging from the ceiling, magazines and other trash littering the floor – and then the camera angle moved. I couldn't believe it: At first glance the background looked like a pre-rendered image, and one second later I was just watching the camera swing around the cabin, focusing on a fallen stewardess. Suddenly she stood, green puke falling from her lips, before her back exploded in a web of slime and spider-like arms, attaching her broken body on the nearest wall.

My God, it was cool, and, after seeing that tape, *D2* once again skyrocketed up my want list. Aside from the battles still looking a bit cheap, this game single-handedly shows what the Dreamcast can do with “realistic” settings, and only makes the wait for both this and *Resident Evil Code: Veronica* even harder. ☺





blue stinger

designs and graphics to die for, but more tweaking in store

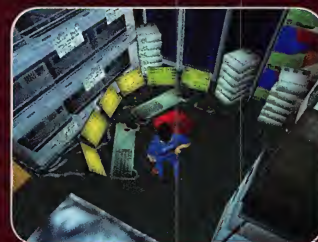


Climax Graphics sure love those fireballs. The explosion effects, complete with flames and wild particles streaming from booming masses, were some of the most impressive I've ever seen in a 3D game. The explosions were also some of the most overused effects of all time! Seriously, our hero Elliot was stomping around launching red-hot bazooka blasts at everything in sight, yielding the same dramatic effect. I'm sure it's immensely satisfying, but I hope to see a variety of ordinance on display in the final version (which was recently delayed until January 14, 1999).

There's no denying the overall quality of *Blue Stinger*. Despite the obvious shortcomings (mindless camera angles), it displayed tremendous high-impact

visuals. In fact, the main reason why Sega and Climax Graphics are delaying the game until mid-January is due to the camera angles and lack of dedicated play mechanics – namely, unique and rewarding puzzle elements.

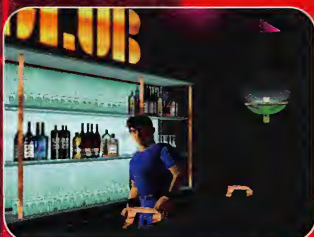
I have complete faith in Sega, however. The camera situation isn't impossible to amend, and the puzzles should be easy to implement during the delay. *Blue Stinger* still shows awesome depth and design. The detailed characters are flanked by beautiful colored lighting from literally dozens of different sources simultaneously. Huge, wicked abominations slam through buildings left and right. Deep, 60 fps environments rival some of the best Voodoo2 has to offer. And the entire theme and premise of uncontrollable scientific experimentation has me intrigued. Keep an eye on this one... it's sure to be a U.S. launch title.



blue stinger



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evolution



dreamcast

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Time to treasure hunt with Sting's all-time coolest project!

Mag Launcher's parents are missing, and a mysterious young girl, Rinea, appears out of nowhere with a letter from Mag's dad instructing him to take care of her. With the help of Goulet, the Launcher family Butler, the pair must search the local ruins for Mag's treasure-hunting parents. Complicating matters, the Number 8 Imperial Army has just marched into town for no apparent reason. The ruins, perhaps?

That's the premise of Sting's cute RPG *Evolution*, slated for a December release. The game employs a smooth 3D engine and introduces unique attack and technique battle systems. The dungeons are randomly generated and very simplistic, but there's an endearing quality to the characters and theme. ✧



climax landers



1101001

one of the most impressive console RPG experiences ever

There's only one way to follow up our massive *Climax Landers* feature from last month: A hands-on report of the game in action, accurate and undiluted, straight from our ace Japanese GR intelligence. Although these shots successfully convey the level of detail present in all of *Climax Landers'* environments, there's no way to show the game in all its glory, shifting at 60 frames per second. As we mentioned last issue, try to imagine the artwork you see before you stretching deep into the horizon,

flowing gracefully without a hint of glitching, chug, or z-buffering issues.

What we saw at the show was nothing short of 128-bit role-playing heaven. Climax's beloved characters ran in and around the walls of gorgeous, shocking townscapes. The textures were ultra-crisp, and the variety of color

schemes was mind-numbing. The sheer opulence and incomparable art design of *Climax Landers* ran unchecked from one scene to the next, like some kind of tapestry of modern 3D design. And unlike many of Sega's first-party titles on display, the game seemed to have a well-defined camera system in place already at this stage of development. I suppose these aesthetics can only improve with time. What a frightening thought.

In terms of gameplay and level structure, we still know very little in the way of concrete details. It's clear that the environments are each constructed in a similar fashion to portal-type corridor games on the PC, in that they're self-contained, highly complex areas floating (if you would) separately from other areas. The sense of connection and continuity between environments is not sacrificed, however, as loading times seem to be well under control. In addition, the randomly generated dungeons were surprisingly detailed. Random dungeons of the past were inherently weak in appearance due to the compromise between efficient construction and graphical complexity. A machine as powerful as the DC, however, mercilessly blurs this fine line. Let the quest begin: *Climax Landers* is sure to be picked-up by SOA for a U.S. release. ✧





sega rally 2

displayed only on tape, sega rally 2 failed to impress

Thank the lucky stars, *Sega Rally 2* has been delayed. I'm normally not this thrilled when a game, especially one I'm technically looking forward to, is pushed back – but in *Rally 2*'s case, I'll make an exception. It's not that the game wasn't fun to play. The fact is, Sega didn't even give us the chance.

How could Sega claim *Sega Rally 2* was a Dreamcast launch title, and only display it on videotape at the TGS? Nearly every game with substantial space, aside from *Geist Force* (also very curious), had playables running, even titles that wouldn't be out for months. Instead, all Sega had was this video – and a slightly lame one at that.

As the only title with the "Powered by Microsoft CE" label displayed, *Sega Rally 2* looked more like a PC game than any of the other Dreamcast offerings that surrounded it. From the appearance of the textures to the way the mountains in the distance faded in, the entire game screamed PC port. Well, that's under-

standable, because that's exactly what the game seems to be.

In my humble opinion, this is the cheapest-looking Dreamcast game yet, especially for a title with such a fan following. What was wrong with just trying to convert the Model 3 Step 2 game? Was the Microsoft CE needed for the modem play (this is the only title so far to support this function), and if so, does that mean future on-line games will have the same look? Will *Daytona 2* look like this? If I want a PC game, then I'll buy it for my PC.

Even though *Sega Rally 2* seemed smooth enough, I'm curious to see what it looks like with more than one car onscreen at once – something the tape failed to display.

Well, I guess we'll all see on *Sega Rally 2*'s new release date, this time on January 14. But by judging from the tape I saw, it wouldn't surprise me to see it slip once again... ☹



godzilla generations

topple downtown tokyo in this simple launch title



Now you too can act out your fantasies of smashing down one of Japan's big cities, dodging bullets and killing the military, all the while sporting the threads of a giant radioactive lizard.

Not exactly pushing the boundaries of your game-playing skills, the idea behind GE's second Dreamcast title is almost pitifully simple: stay within the city limits and destroy absolutely everything. You can swing your tail around, launch special energy attacks, or just walk through buildings if you're feeling lazy. Of course, the cities are well defended by tanks and annoying planes, but these can be simply destroyed if you see them early enough.

Although the creatures don't look that bad while stumbling around, and the smoke effects are impressive, the graphics overall aren't that hot. Buildings kind of "fall apart" when you destroy them, and most of the rubble vanishes when it hits the ground – not to mention this game also had some of the worst frame-

rate issues of any game in the Dreamcast booth: the game would turn into a virtual slideshow when major buildings fell. The camera work, on the other hand, was quite cool. Trying to emulate a *Godzilla* movie, they switch angles every few seconds and often give you a view from ground or overhead viewpoints, creating a cinematic effect.

And hey, for you *Godzilla* fanatics, Sega already stated this won't be the last game you'll see in the series. Apparently, they're already working on a game featuring a number of familiar faces from other *Godzilla* movies. *Mothra*, watch out!

Sure, *Godzilla Generations* is a filler game, one of those titles you'll buy just because it's available with the system launch, and will most likely end up on your closet floor a few weeks later. But then again, unlike my previous launch experiences, I've got a feeling *Godzilla Generations* will survive on my shelf a bit longer than *Putt Putt Goes to the Moon* did. ☹

carrier

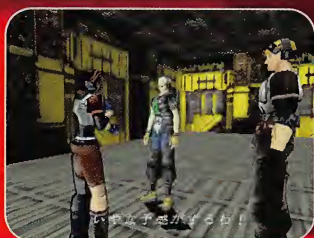
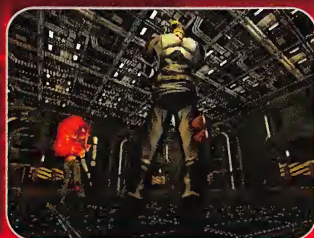
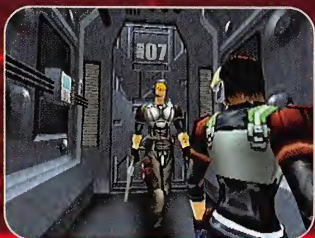
this aircraft carrier is loaded with a nuclear nightmare

Ok, I'm cheating a bit. Actually, *Carrier* wasn't actually announced at either of the shows, but we just got these shots in and *Godzilla* certainly didn't need any more room. So here we go.

Taking place aboard an aircraft carrier, Jaleco's new Dreamcast announcement puts you in the role of either a male or female specialist brought aboard to investigate some sort of nuclear incident. Jaleco stated they're planning on making the storyline a prominent part of the experience, and promise the game, despite its familiar look, will be much more than just a nice-looking *Resident Evil* clone.

There are two new systems being introduced in *Carrier*: the Multi-Task System, in which multiple characters are doing things in real time on other areas of the ship; and the Auto Action System, designed to let you create your own outcome to the storyline by giving you options on where you want to go next. For example, if one of your team members tells you to meet him on a certain time at a certain place, you can ignore that request and the overall story will change.

Take a look at our next issue for an in-depth look at *Carrier*, along with a bunch of new screenshots. ☹



psychic force



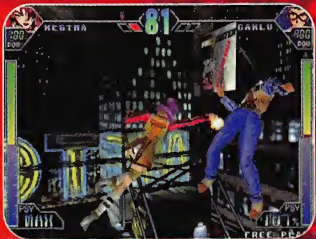
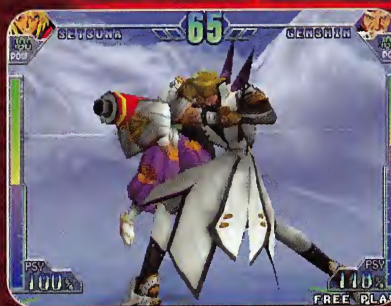
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taito's latest arcade smash is dreamcast bound



On the special VIP day of the TGS, Taito showed select press the first pictures of the Dreamcast version of their hit arcade game, *Psychic Force 2012*. Currently at 30 percent complete and set for a spring release, Taito are confident that they'll be able to port their first game to the Dreamcast without suffering any drop in quality despite the awesome 3D performance of their incredible arcade Wolf Board.

Besides a perfect arcade port, Taito will also be including various original Dreamcast modes as well. For example, there will be an individual story mode for each character when you play against the CPU with special endings for each of them. In addition, Taito will include a "watch" mode where you can observe two CPU characters fight it out. This will prove useful for studying the CPU's offensive and defensive tactics. *Psychic Force* has already spawned an anime series and garnered a loyal following among Japanese gamers. The melding of free-form airborne combat, anime themes, and Zuntata's high-energy musical accompaniment is indeed an attractive ensemble. We expect many other new features will be added before the game ships sometime this winter.



geist force



1101001

sega of america's first dreamcast title makes an appearance

Shown for the second time on video at the TGS, *Geist Force* was quite a step down from what we saw earlier at this year's E3. Gone are the pulsating jellyfish boss and madness-inducing dogfights we saw behind closed doors in April, replaced by slightly jerky frame rates and less-flamboyant backgrounds. But at least we know we're looking at an actual game this time.

The scope of the *Geist Force* is still impressive, though. They showed scenes of the ship gliding through icy caverns, over the swirling clouds of alien worlds, and high above what looked to be American farmland, all the while keeping a good frame rate aside from a few major stutters. Enemies were scarce, but the few they did show were quickly targeted by the ship's cross hairs, and blown apart by arcing blasts that looked like something out of *Panzer Dragoon*.

Speaking of *Panzer Dragoon*, a few of the conceptual sketches we've seen of *Geist Force* showcase areas that look like something straight out of a *PD* game, suggesting that Team Andromeda might have had a bit of influence in this first American-made Dreamcast game. And hey, if nothing else, at least *GF* has some "Pasm." Actually, it has "Non-Stop Pasm."

Standing for "play," "action," "story," and "music," Sega's curious new strapline for *Geist Force* still makes me laugh whenever I repeat those words, but hey, it's for the Japanese market; they can do what they want.


Not really surprising, as we were going to press with this piece, Sega had an announcement. Not only has this game been delayed, but it's been pushed back to an undetermined date. A strange move for a title that, up until last week, was set to be unleashed a week after the DC launch... ☹





additional titles

a selection of other dreamcast delights...

While many of us see the Japanese Dreamcast launch as nothing more than an excuse to play games like *Sonic Adventure* and *Virtua Fighter 3tb* at home, it's easy to overlook those "other titles." You know, the games we'll all buy in that madness-inducing fever that appears along with a new system, making every title seem like a winner. Here's a few of the ones that may or may not end up on your closet floor when you come to your senses... 

monaco

Ubisoft's first Dreamcast game is a port of their latest PC offering, *Monaco Grand Prix*. You'll get to race around in one of those speedy cars, with every option on earth at your control. Have problems with your gear ratios? Change 'em! Telemetry looks a bit bad? Um, fix it! *Monaco* on the PC gives you a ridiculous amount of control over your car's performance, something that might be modified for this version.



egg

Using a combination of hand-drawn backgrounds, pre-rendered characters, and fully polygonal battle scenes, *Elemental Gimmick Gear* certainly covers every graphical angle. This RPG, while a bit rough around the edges (the hand-drawn areas were rumored to have been developed for the Saturn), did look fun, and had some of the highest-quality and fastest-loading FMV sequences I've ever seen.



7th cross

The only reason I'll play this game is to spend time as my favorite animal on earth, the amoeba. That's right! You get to control an amoeba! Isn't that cool? Starting off as this one-celled critter, you've got to evolve up the food chain, battling other life forms to gain their power... or something. The graphics were quite poor, and the battles looked boring, but who cares? There are amoebae here!



july

If any game truly pushes the Dreamcast to its technical limits, it would have to be *July*. Never before have I seen still images and a lame map screen displayed with such power... OK, actually, this game sucked. Nothing more than a graphical adventure, you have to navigate your character using a 3D map screen and interact with still images of other people. It has nice CG and could have a good story, but who cares?



puyo-puyon

Well, wishes really do come true. We can finally experience *Puyo Puyon* as the way it was always meant to be enjoyed, at high resolution and sixty frames a second!

Man, I didn't even believe that myself... Really, what's the big deal? First *July*, then this. I'm sure fans of the series will dig the new costumes and stuff, but what happened to titles that make us feel like we're sitting on the edge of gaming evolution?

incoming

One of the first Dreamcast games is also the first true PC port. Rage Software's *Incoming* hit PCs in the U.S. a couple months ago with limited success, and gives you the ability to fend off aliens using a combination of arcade gun-turret sequences and "real-time-strategy" battles. Unfortunately, this looks to be a straight port of the original version - meaning if you want to play the game at home now, just buy it on PC...



turb

OK, you're this cat-like girl and you're on a planet of lions, saving them from a race of sheep. Meanwhile there are giant ice cream cones in the place of trees, the houses are flat-shaded in colors of pink and yellow, and the ground is flat, covered with psychedelic textures. Even though I don't frown on drug use among software developers, this is one team that should've sobered up before signing off on the design documents... This game is going to be so poor, I can't wait to play it at home!



dreamcast software Lineup

RELEASE	GAME TITLE	GENRE
11-27-98	GODZILLA GENERATIONS	ACTION
11-27-98	VIRTUA FIGHTER: 3TB	FIGHTING
11-27-98	PEN PEN TRICELON	ACTION/RACING
11-27-98	JULY	ADVENTURE
12-23-98	SONIC ADVENTURE	3D ACTION
12-23-98	INCOMING	3D ACTION
12-23-98	EVOLUTION	RPG
12-23-98	SEVENTH CROSS	SIMULATION RPG
12-23-98	TETRIS 4D	PUZZLE
01-14-99	BLUE STINGER	3D ACTION
01-14-99	SEGA RALLY 2	RACING
01-14-99	SENGOKU TURB	ACTION RPG
01-99	CLIMAX LANDERS	RPG
02-99	AERODANCING	FLIGHT SIMULATION
02-99	DIGITAL HORSE RACING	SIMULATION
02-99	GET BASS	FISHING SIMULATION
02-99	WHITE ILLUMINATION	TRAVEL COMMUNICATION
03-99	CHO-HAMARU GOLF	SPORTS (GOLF)
03-99	GREAT BUGGY	RACING
03-99	COOL BOARDERS	RACING
03-99	MAH JONG	TABLE (MAH JONG)
03-99	PUYO-PUYON	VERSUS
AFTER 03-99	SHIENRYU 2	SHOOTING
AFTER 03-99	DYNAMITE ROBO	ACTION
AFTER 03-99	CARRIER	SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	THE KING OF FIGHTERS '98	FIGHTING
AFTER 03-99	MERUKURIUSU PRETTY	FANTASY SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	MONSTER BREED	MONSTER SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	BIOHAZARD - CODE VERONICA	ADVENTURE
AFTER 03-99	POWER STONE	FIGHTING
AFTER 03-99	HIRYU-NO KEN RETSUDEN	FIGHTING
AFTER 03-99	CRACK 2	SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	NIJIIRO TENSHI	SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	AKIHABARA DENNO	SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	GIANT GLAM	FIGHTING
AFTER 03-99	VIRTUAL ON 2	BATTLE SIMULATION
AFTER 03-99	PROJECT BERKLEY	RPG
AFTER 03-99	PROFESSIONAL SOCCER CLUB	SPORTS SIMULATION
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AFTER 03-99	GUNDAM	TBD
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AFTER 03-99	D'S DINING TABLE 2	ACTION RPG
TBA	GEIST FORCE	3D SHOOTING
TBA	MONACO GRAND PRIX	RACING

project berkeley

Although you'll hear the latest *Project Berkley* revelations in this month's news column, here's the original information Yu Suzuki gave at the Sega New Challenge Conference II.

He commented that this project will combine all his experience as a game developer, and that we'll see aspects of every title he's ever worked on within this release. The game world itself is said to be the largest ever attempted, with hundreds of characters and unparalleled real-world detail. It will have RPG aspects, but not like those found in *Final Fantasy* or *Dragon Quest*, and, while there will be action scenes, the game is not based on them. "It will have lots of everything," Mr. Naka was heard to comment. "Lots of animation, animals, planes, and cars..." While that statement is a bit cryptic, it does hint at the magnitude this title might present. Think about it: an RPG-type game in a real-world environment - the scale could be unprecedented...



the future...

Next month will be a big one for Dreamcast fans, as our February issue marks the beginning of our hands-on DC import reviews. Two weeks after this issue closes, the Dreamcast goes on sale in Japan, and we're planning on packing our next magazine with everything from *Sonic Adventure* to *Pen Pen Tricelon*. See you then!

Virtua Fighter 3tb, *Sonic Adventure*, *Blue Stinger*, *Sega Rally 2*, *Geist Force*, *Godzilla Generations*, *Climax Landers*, *Puyo Puyon* all © Sega. *Evolution* © Sega & ESP. *D2* © Warp. *PenPen Tricelon* © GE. *July* © Fortyfive. *Seventh Cross*, *Turb* © NEC. *E.G.G* © Hudson, *Birthday*. *Incoming* © Rage. *Monaco Grand Prix* © Ubisoft.



SEGA™

NAOMI™

DRIVE

The Naomi arcade hardware has caused a great deal of excitement since its debut. Fantastic sequels like *House of the Dead 2* and stunning original efforts such as Capcom's *Power Stone* have demonstrated the sheer polygon crunching power of the hardware, and its incredible affordability is unprecedented. So far the amazing games we've seen running on Naomi have secured its viability, but we felt it was time to fully reveal the origins of this powerful next-generation arcade hardware. Our resourceful Japanese correspondent went straight to the source: The general manager of AM R&D Dept. 1 and co-developer of the Naomi hardware, Rikiya Nakagawa. An in-depth conversation regarding Sega's arcade plans and the Naomi-Dreamcast connection ensued, and some very interesting details surfaced.

Who originally thought of the name "Naomi"?

It was the vice president's idea. It doesn't have any special meaning.

Was the name decided on before the Dreamcast logo was designed?

The name is the same as the development code name, which was chosen before we decided on the Dreamcast logo.

Was it important to use the Dreamcast's logo symbol in Naomi's logo?

We thought the Dreamcast design was very well done, so we wanted to use it as well. [laughs]

How much interaction did you have during the development of the Naomi arcade hardware?

To a certain extent, the basic hardware components, like the CPU and graphic chips, were already fixed by consumer development. For the arcade, we told them that it had to use ROM and we needed to increase the memory, etc.

How long have you had the Naomi development systems?

From around the end of last year.

Is it just coincidence that AM 1 has all the first Naomi games, or was it a special policy that you start R&D first?

There was no special policy; we just happened to be the first to be able to show off our Naomi games. All the AM groups will create Naomi titles. However, sometimes we're the fastest!

Do all the AM teams intend to start Naomi development immediately, or will there be more Model 3 games to come?

At the moment we've still got Model 3 games in development, so for a while we'll be releasing both Naomi and Model 3 games. In a year's time I don't know what the situation will be, but the Model 3 won't suddenly disappear.

Is the Naomi really better than the Model 3? Is there anything the Model 3 is better at?

The Naomi is more powerful than the Model 3, but the Model 3 has a lot of custom graphics hardware, so it's much easier to use. To a certain extent, we have to do much more in software on the Naomi. Other than that, if we want to have a multi-cabinet link up on the Naomi, we need to add on a special communication board as well. That's about all.

Do you believe the Naomi hardware is a viable arcade solution for years to come? Have you considered any ways to expand upon its power if need be (like the step 1.5 and step 2)?

I can't really say anything about how the Naomi will develop in the coming years, but it goes without saying that we're already considering a new high-end board to replace the Model 3, although it would probably be best not to call it the Model 4. However, up to now, Sega has always had a low-end board that has good cost performance and a high-end board. For example, the Model 3 and Model 2. However, the Naomi has reached the level of the Model 3, so we must create a new high-end board. I can't yet say when this board will appear.

Now that the cost of manufacturing and distributing upcoming Naomi-based arcade games is so inexpensive, do you think you can finally reach the mass market?

Yes, I do. We certainly have more third-party companies lined up to work on the Naomi than we did with either the ST-V or the Model 2.

How many of the 20 third-party companies that you announced are Japanese companies?

About half of them. However, we are still talking with other companies, so this number is likely to increase.

Do they all have Naomi development kits?

Yes, they do. Most of them have Dreamcast development kits as well, but a few have Naomi development kits only. Compared to the ST-V, which was used for the Saturn, the response from the industry in regard to the Naomi has been much better.

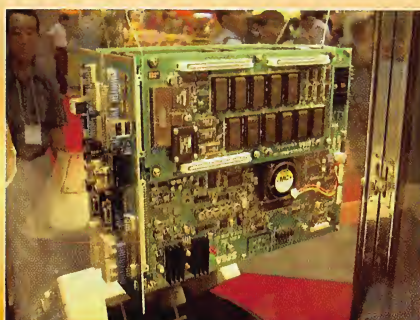
Just like the Model 2, will you at some point allow third-party companies to use the Model 3?

I think that most companies will naturally go for the Naomi. It makes more sense for them because of its excellent cost/performance.

-TECH TALK-

What resolution are Naomi games running at?

The games we showed at the AM show were all running at 640 x 480 VGA resolution. That's the highest we can do.



In its purest form: The Naomi arcade board. Although it is essentially an arcade version of the Dreamcast, more board space is required to fit and run the large ROM cards.



The man with the master Naomi plan, AM's Rikuya Nakagawa, poses for GR at his headquarters in Japan. Check out the Saturn in the background! Good man. To his right we have Naomi's upcoming driving cabinet.



What are the newest polygon performance benchmarks for the Naomi hardware?

Around three million polygons per second. Of course, that will go up or down, depending on how you use the polygons and what special effects you use, but it's practically the same as the Dreamcast.

How big is the average Naomi game?

The largest size we can have for the program is 168 Megabytes.

Is the RAM so high (double that of Dreamcast) simply due to the incredible resolution of an arcade monitor, or are there other reasons?

Obviously, one reason is so that we can make the arcade version better than the home version. However, the main factor is that we don't use a CD-ROM for the Naomi, so we can't, for example, stream music off the CD. So we need to use the extra memory to compensate for this.

Other than the memory, are there any other differences between the Naomi and the Dreamcast?

Not really. However, depending on how we use that extra memory, it can make a difference.

Do all third parties have the up-to-date development kits now for the final Power VRSG DC chipset?

Yes, they do.

How many Naomi games can we expect in 1999?

Just from Sega, I expect we'll be able to release around 10 games. We can't say anything about third-party titles.

Considering House of the Dead is already receiving a Naomi sequel, can we expect the same for other famous Sega titles?

The possibility is certainly there for Model 3 game sequels to appear on the Naomi.

Is it important to maintain a long presence in arcades first, to increase awareness of the games and Naomi hardware?

If a Naomi game appears on the Dreamcast too soon, then arcade games will lose their appeal. Ideally, we would want a six-month gap between

the arcade and home version.

However, if by using the Visual Memory we can create some new enjoyment between the Dreamcast and the Naomi, there won't be such a long gap between them. We can release the home version much sooner so that, for example, players can develop their characters at home, then play with them at the arcade.

-HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 explained-

Is the HOTD 2 development team the same as HOTD 1?

About half of them are the same. All the main staff has remained.

When did you decide to use Naomi and not Model 3?

Obviously the cost performance factor was important, but more than that, there are several CG effects that the Model 3 can't do which the Naomi board can.

Did you ever consider using the Model 3 for the project?

We did consider using the Model 3 at one point, but when we found out about the Naomi, we decided to wait for that instead.

Was the game in planning before the Naomi was developed?

After HOTD 1 was finished, we did think a little about what to do for a sequel. However, we didn't really do any planning before we got hold of the Naomi. Development started for real at the end of last year, at the same time as we received the Naomi.





linda rotta - blood bullet

Blood Bullet

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD SIDE STORY

How have you improved the route system?

In *HOTD 1*, there were a lot of routes in stages one and two, but very few in stages three and four. This time for *HOTD 2*, we've got a much better balance of routes throughout the entire game.

HOTD 1 was a really tough game. Will HOTD 2 be just as hard?

It's been quite a while since *HOTD 1* was released, and a lot of people have become very good at this game. In order to make *HOTD 2* just as challenging for them, we've had to make it just as hard, if not harder, to keep it interesting. The version we showed at the AM show was a little easy, because we haven't started balancing the game's difficulty yet.

Obviously the graphics are much better, but what improvements have you made to the gameplay?

The story is much deeper than before. It has a very cinematic atmosphere to it, and we've included a lot of elements to make the game more enjoyable and the plot more understandable. The nonplayer characters speak a lot more and they react in a more realistic manner. In addition, depending on the route you take, the story is different as well.

Were you worried that, with the Naomi's high quality graphics, the zombies might become too realistic and thus become grotesque?

If we really wanted to do that, we could, but it's a matter of class. What's important is whether the game is enjoyable to play or not. We won't make the zombies so sickening that it isn't fun to play. However, we have changed all the blood to green. There won't be any more red blood in *HOTD 2*.

Will any of the zombies or monsters from HOTD 1 reappear in HOTD 2?

They won't all appear, but some of them will, maybe in slightly altered forms. We're still in development now, so we haven't decided yet what the final layout will be. There will certainly be plenty of new zombies and monsters included.

What do you think of your rivals, Konami's Evil Night and SNK's Blood Busters 2?

I think they are really great games. [laughs]

Is it true that there is a House of the Dead movie in production?

We might. Certainly there are rumors that we are producing a movie based on the first *HOTD* game. [laughs]

-BITE THE BLOOD BULLET-

Why did you decide to make a House of the Dead side story?

Well, *HOTD* is a gun shooting game, so you don't really have an opportunity to go where you want to go or do anything other than shoot. We

wanted to have a game where you could have more freedom to go where you wanted to go and do various things, but still within the *HOTD* world.

When did you start development?

We started in February of this year. Actually, we first wanted to do something like this way back when we were doing *HOTD 1*, so we've been keeping this idea very warm for a long time [laughs]. The AM show version was about 20 percent complete; now it's about 23 percent.

It's being billed as an RPG-style game, but isn't that kind of genre difficult to sell as an arcade game?

It looks like an RPG-style game, but it's really a real-time action game.

Are you developing the Dreamcast version simultaneously?

No, we aren't. We're just working on the arcade version at the moment.

Other than the name, is there any connection between the HOTD and Blood Bullet? For example, will any of the characters in HOTD appear in Blood Bullet?

That's a mystery for now!

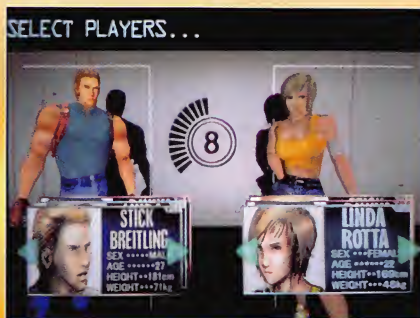
-NAOMI AT HOME IN ARCADES-

Will all Naomi games use the Naomi cabinet?

Not necessarily. It'll depend on the game. This time, *HOTD 2* will not use the Naomi cabinet, because we have our own special *HOTD* cabinet. This means that it won't utilize the Dreamcast's Visual Memory system (VM), but you will be able to enjoy *HOTD 2* in our special theater cabinet.

Does this mean the end of specialist cabinets? What about the simulation games like Get Bass, etc.?

Not at all. These kind of simulation games will continue to have their own dedicated cabinet.





The home connection is complete with the Dreamcast VM cart ports included with each and every Naomi cabinet. Imagine powering up characters at home to play your friends in arcades, or vice versa! Capcom is so thrilled with the possibilities that they're considering a simultaneous release of Power Stone on Dreamcast and Naomi!

When will the first Naomi cabinets appear in the arcade?

It depends on the game and also the country. At the moment the cabinet is still in development, so we might not release them this year.

Other than new-look design and the VM capability, what other differences are there between the Naomi cabinet and previous Sega cabinets?

The screen is now a special VGA monitor, which gives a very clear and beautiful display.

SNK tried something like the VM system before with their Neo-Geo cabinet, but it didn't work because the connector slot would get dirty and the user's data would be corrupted. Are you confident that your system will be reliable?

Obviously in an arcade there's a danger that this kind of situation could occur, and we are worried about it. However, we're currently working on a special system to prevent this problem, and I'm confident that we'll be able to overcome this difficulty.

To what extents will you be sharing functions of the Dreamcast and Naomi through the VM?

For example, with a baseball game you could create your team at home on the Dreamcast and then raise it so it's as strong as possible. You could then save your team data onto your VM, take it to the arcade, and play your team against other people. You could do this for other sports as well, such as soccer.

Are you planning to put this kind of feature into Dynamite Baseball '98?

We're thinking about it, but it's possible that we won't include it in the game this time. It's the same for Blood Bullet as well. We would really like to use the VM device in some way for both of these games, and we're considering some possibilities now, but whether or not we will actually use it in the end is too early to say.

Are the Naomi development kits the same as those being given to Dreamcast developers, or are they slightly enhanced?

The consumer and arcade development kits are different. The Dreamcast uses the CD-ROM, doesn't it? Of course, the graphics are the same, but the handling of the data is different, so if you want to develop for the Dreamcast and the arcade you still have to buy two different development kits.

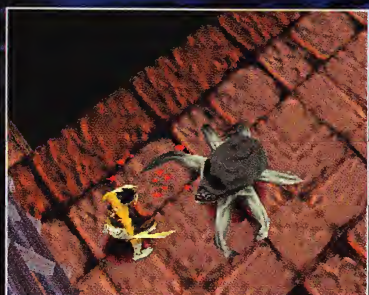
Are you worried that with such a strong link between the Naomi and the Dreamcast, players will stop going to the arcade and just wait for the consumer version instead?

We'll be careful to ensure that this doesn't happen. By using the VM device carefully, it's extra fun to play the arcade version, so we'll be able to attract more users. In addition, at home you won't be able to play on a 50-inch screen with a dedicated sound system, so the arcade will still be the best place to play. It goes without saying that if you want to enjoy a realistic driving game, then you'll need the steering wheel, gear stick and handbrake that you can only experience on a dedicated arcade cabinet.

A huge thanks to Mr. Nakagawa for his time and informative answers. All the best to him and the entire AM1 team. We'll continue to cover Naomi before it hits arcades and well after, alongside our monthly feast of Dreamcast info. Arcade and home hardware have never been so close. The potential for perfect translations of gorgeous arcade games boggles the mind! ♪



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GIANTS

BY DAVE REES

*Three alien races clash in a bizarre battle...
A majestic planet becomes a vortex of death!*

Considering *Giants* an action game is a likely misconception. So is qualifying it as a real-time strategy game. Perhaps it is somewhere in between? Not really. It is just different. A new approach, a different take, perhaps a new genre. With elements of action and strategy verily intact, and a strong multiplayer option, there is no question as to where its inspiration is rooted. How it managed to part company from existing genres is due to the creativity and talents of Planet Moon, creators of *MDK*.

Giants veers far from the dark, somewhat Giger-esque look of *MDK*; its world is a very vibrant, polychromatic, outlandish place filled with fantastical creatures. In fact, it is hard to think of any game that compares to its resplendent appeal. Maybe a film, a strange animation short or even a fantasy painting can parallel such beauty, but not a game. But a picture is only worth a thousand words – a game is worth much more.

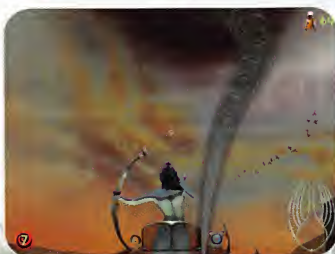
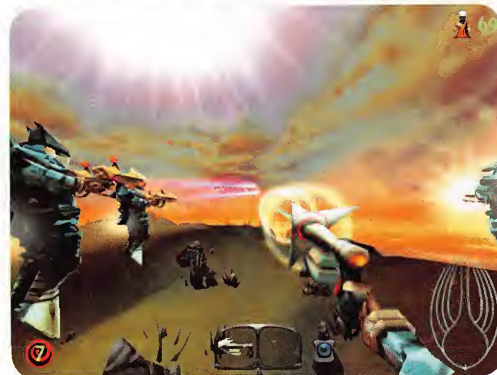
Much like a real-time strategy game, there are three different entities to control: the celestial-looking Sea Reapers, the militant Meccaryns, or a brutal giant,

Kabuto. Each race has distinct abilities, weaponry, and attributes that make for very unique play experiences. Your objective is to dominate your adversaries by outmaneuvering them and destroying their base.

Much like an action game, *Giants* is a 3D arcade experience that plunges you into intense situations of heated battles. The savage Kabuto sets traps and swallows his adversaries whole. The Meccaryns utilize high-tech weaponry and gadgets that allow them to fly. And the deviously alluring Sea Reapers can conjure devastation with their elemental powers and quick reflexes.

But it is how you manage to fortify yourself that ranks *Giants* as a distinguished experience. Scattered about the planet are intelligent creatures named Smarties. Befriending and protecting these worker bees is your ticket to survival. They will build bases, traps, spells, weapons and new buildings. Without them, you are doomed.

Mixing diverse gameplay with a strikingly original visual presence, *Giants* is sure to stand tall when it is released.





As co-founder and vice president of Westwood Studios, Louis Castle certainly has a good deal of responsibility on his shoulders: Managing a juggernaut in the gaming industry is far from easy. But let us put aside his corporate title for a moment. On top of being a self-proclaimed professional rambler, a passionate gamer, and an overall gaming enthusiast, Castle is producing Westwood's upcoming game *Lands of Lore 3* – the third installment in a series that has enrolled quite a following since it was conceived in the early nineties. His dedication and love for the role-playing genre is easily recognized and strongly underscored by what he had to show me.

Looking back at the two previous *Lands of Lore*

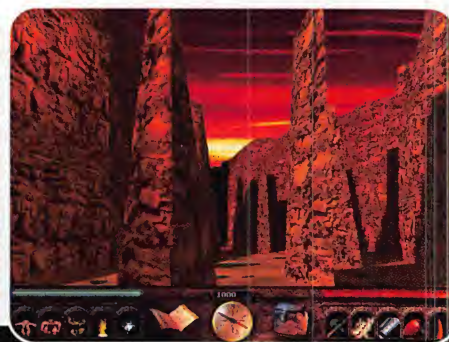
titles reminds us of the enjoyable and unique role-playing experiences we once had. However, the games were not without flaw. The wisdom earned by previous efforts, the hits and misses, has nurtured a drawing board for the *Lands of Lore 3* development team. For those who think Westwood is most notable for their C&C products, the company has deep roots that extend into the realms of role-playing. Castle made this notion quite evident from the very start.

"We did the *Eye of the Beholder* series prior to *Lands of Lore 1*, so we have a long history in RPGs. In *Eye of the Beholder*, we had lots of characters in our story. The thing we didn't like about that was that it often felt like you had a multi-headed hydra. You don't really feel like there's five guys in a party – more like five heads on this monster. You all move in unison and it just never really feels quite right. Lots



LANDS OF LORE 3

BY DAVE REES



The diversity in *Lands of Lore 3* is so great that discovering a new area will almost seem like entering a different game. Enchanted forests, haunted houses, nuclear wastelands, an active volcano and lush towns combine to present a world that teems with life. Notice how the detailed inventory screen (middle) can be opened without impeding on gameplay.



An enthralling world filled with enchantment and diversity is yours to discover. Gladstone never looked so beautiful, and fans as well as newcomers will find it hard to escape the alluring combination of a modern 3D engine and a captivating story.

of attempts at breaking them up, having them come and go, haven't worked. We tried by having characters come into the story; they would go away and come back again. And that worked pretty well from a storytelling point of view, but it did have a fatal flaw in the sense that when they took one of your really good items when they left, it was really irritating... We also dealt with classes and races differently because we predefined three heroes and we let you choose between them, and each of them had a different focus or a different ability. One was mostly a wizard, one was mostly a fighter, one was mostly a sort of clerical character. That worked out pretty well, too, but it had some flaws in the sense that you didn't seem to have control over how the character developed, as you would have liked. In *Lands of Lore 2* we took a totally different approach. We made a character who was actually three races at once that had this morphing curse on him, and that was how we addressed race. And then we let you be any kind of discipline... It worked, as a game, and I think for people that played all the way through, it was certainly a captivating and wonderful experience from a story point of view. But it didn't give us the sort of clear delineation of class and race that we wanted. We are still delicately trying to dance around this issue because we want a

strong story... That's the most important thing for us."

While early, *Lands of Lore 3* is proof that Westwood's impassioned head figure is an honest guy. The game's hero is a 16-year-old chap named Copper LeGray, who is put into some really challenging situations. He's young enough to where players can guide him in any direction they want. He can interact with guild masters who let him partake on a quest as a sort of initiation. By doing that, the act of being a particular class is a conscious, premeditated decision that the player makes. Rather than set a character up as a magic user, gamers will actually have to visit a magic guild and fulfill the requirement asked. Deciding the character's direction is a part of the game, not an interface. Certainly, nobody else has taken this same approach to the same degree.

To prevent players from becoming too narrow in their abilities, and thus ill equipped for various battle situations, the game features a relatively underused concept in the PC RPG genre: the familiar. Unlike typical party members, familiars are magical beings that are bound to you. As you gain experience and hone your skills, so does your familiar. You can command them to pick up items, fight, flee or you can even scout out an area while looking through their eyes. But what will affect the

game's appeal most will be how they talk to you and provide insight into various situations, which innately reduces the schizophrenia often experienced when playing an RPG. Familiars from any guild can be bonded with, regardless of whether or not he is from the guild you selected. You can be a fighter thief, and acquire a magic-user familiar. You can be a magic user and acquire a fighter familiar. Once you select a familiar, you select it for life.

But what about technology? Unlike the first two episodes, the third time is truly a technological charm. Supported by a new 3D engine that tactfully utilizes voxels to render the characters, enemies, and some background objects, the game's look is unique and impressive. But, not surprisingly, technology is secondary in *Lands of Lore 3*. Westwood are not trying to out-feature a *Quake* or an *Unreal*. Their goal is to tell an enchanting story in a very amazing, captivating environment. But they didn't have to tell that to me. One look and I already knew. ☺



Louis Castle is not shy when it comes to talking about Westwood's upcoming games – especially *Lands of Lore 3*.



LUNAR: SILVER STAR STORY

COMPLETE
BY MIKE GRIFFIN

Lunar was an epic RPG experience back when it debuted on the Mega/Sega CD years ago. If you had the system and you played RPGs, it was a godsend. Unfortunately, many of you missed the game back then due to the Sega CD's relatively poor performance in the U.S. and minimal Mega CD imports. Later, Working Designs went on to translate *Lunar: Eternal Blue*, and it sold fairly well, but it certainly didn't find a home with as many gamers as it rightfully should have.

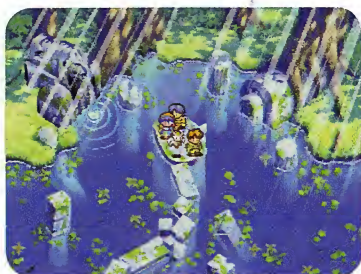
Now, with the PS version of *Lunar: SSS*, Working Designs may receive the credit they deserve, and a large U.S. audience may finally experience the game. And let's not forget the fact that first-time *Lunar* players will be enjoying the "Complete" version of the game — a remix, if you will, containing added bits of quests that had to be omitted from the 16-bit *Lunar*. All of this equates to hours of old-school RPG immersion with Game Arts' first big hit.

If you've ever played a Game Arts RPG, you're probably aware of the fantastic storylines they're capable of. Although *Grandia* is their undisputed champion in this area, *Lunar:SSS* offers its own unique and oftentimes epic story. This fact is especially important when it comes to a game like *Lunar*, which offers minimal next-generation flare other than a rich color palette. Instead, tons of lovely FMV anime shorts play during integral moments, while the in-game text and character portraits convey

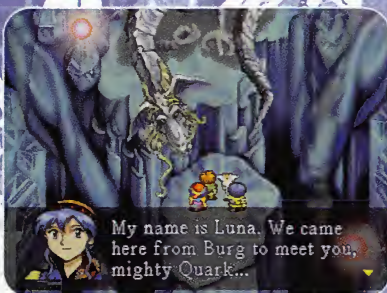
emotion and excitement perfectly. *Lunar* was the first RPG to make me truly care about my characters, and I'm experiencing this sensation all over again with the 32-bit version. But just how old-school is

Lunar? It's in the vein of *Albert Odyssey*, *Tales of Destiny*, or, to a lesser extent (because of the 3D), *Breath of Fire 3*: Easy to read menu systems, great little battle options and gorgeous hand-drawn artwork are the rule of the day.

On the translation front, although our preview disc was only semicomplete, Working Designs have done well. Having previously translated the Sega CD version, they have heavy experience with this title, but the "Complete" PS version contains almost 80 percent more text, so it's a whole new process. The patented WD jokes are back in *Lunar* and they've stated that they're committed to the topical humor for all future translations, like it or not. If that's the case, I guess they'll be judged by the quality of the humor itself. We'll have a full review of this excellent remixed classic soon. ☾



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THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

What a serene depiction of nature *Myth 2* presents us. Reminiscent of Ireland's greenest pastures, rolling hills embossed with Celtic patterns draw the landscape. Birds softly glide through the air, singing nature's delicate song. Fish splash in a nearby stream with playful propensity. A gentle breeze rolls across the landscape; the rustle of a churning windmill and the tumbling leaves underscore its presence. This is tranquility in its purest form, a scene that might even inspire Ralph Waldo Emerson—for a short time, anyway. Unfortunately, in *Myth 2*, such theatres of ideal beauty are always destined to become a macabre portrait of dismemberment and carnage.

Who's responsible for such a defacing? Scottish Berserks who charge at you in a mad dash, determined to dismember your soldiers. Undead wights that meander from the depths of a nearby bog, hoping to get close enough before they explode into paralysis-inducing pulpy flak. Archers who turn the greenest of fields into scorched soil and charred

flesh with their flaming arrows. Wizards who send nebulous heat-seeking fireballs into the fray of battle; a direct hit on an archer is instant death. Mortar dwarves who load their mini-cannons with a deadly cannonball; the sound of thunder it causes upon impact is usually followed by the splash of blood and intestines as body parts roll across the ground. And you, the acting general directing each and every maneuver. After about two extremely satisfying minutes of *Myth 2*, you can turn a paradise into a vivid depiction of a horrific, blood-splattered, limb-strewn, corpse-littered nightmare.

It should come as no surprise that for the past several months, turning dreamscapes into bloody battlefields has been our favorite hobby. To our delight, the latest version of the game now includes more single-player levels, multiplayer maps, and features that have us drooling in anticipation of the final release. Here's a rundown of the latest array of multiplayer maps and some of the new units:



Murderous battles of epic proportions await thee in...

myth II



Archer (a)

Archers are pretty much the same as they were in the original *Myth*, except for one key special attack: flaming arrows. While burning your foe's army into crispy pieces of flesh is certainly satisfying, it doesn't help your score at all, but it does subtract significantly from your opponent's tally.

Brigands (b)

Gripping a shiny circular shield, these soldiers appear well prepared to take on a heavy swarm of arrows. As swords for hire, they fight to earn their wages.

Heron Guard (c)

A well-equipped version of the Journeyman, the Heron Guard is fast and armed with two razor-sharp swords that cause severe damage. As a tradeoff, he can only heal twice—a far cry from the Journeyman's six. Keep them close to your archers.

Stygian Knight (d)

Sporting a full suit of armor replete with spiked shoulder pads, and wielding a huge halberd, the Stygian Knight is a hardened warrior with an extremely powerful attack. While invincible to normal arrow attacks, he remains vulnerable to





GOING TO TOWN ► 5 STARTING LOCATIONS: HIGH CARNAGE (1)

An ongoing favorite map at GR, Going to Town is usually a tough test of cunning and tactical ability. At the center of the map is a small village filled with country cottages. Once you make it to town, the clutter of houses and trees can be used as defensive barriers to protect your dwarves, wights and other soldiers. However, don't be surprised if you

find yourself in a discombobulated, panic-stricken retreat into town when you are attacked from both sides!

Firing an incendiary arrow into the heart of an oncoming army will likely cause many third-degree burns. Too bad each archer has only one!

DEMISE ON THE PLAINS/RAID ON THE PLAINS ► 5 STARTING LOCATIONS: MEDIUM CARNAGE (2)

A gigantic hill rests at the center of an uneven prairie. These maps are excellent for a quick game of King of the Hill and should be played with more than two players, as the first player on the hill will almost always win – unless he has no idea how to play! The only apparent difference between the two maps is the types of units available.

GOthic ► 7 STARTING LOCATIONS : HIGH CARNAGE (3)

A sprawling Celtic terrain of grassy knolls, dirt, streams, bogs and eroded earthen walls, this map contains numerous strategic locations for both defensive and offensive maneuvers. To protect your soldiers from flaming arrows, keep them close to water if possible. Because Gothic is such a huge map, it is ideal for four or more players. A quick game is unheard of.



all other attacks, including flaming arrows.

Maul (e)

This giant tusked beast is very sluggish, but remains a tough kill. His weapon of choice is a huge spiked club, which does a tremendous amount of damage with each strike and gives him enough power to take down a group of warriors without help. While they make great defensive forces, they sure leave a huge mess when they go down. Rumor has it that they make great ham salad.

Mortar Dwarf (f)

Perhaps the most satisfying new Myth unit, but also the most frustrating, a few

mortar dwarves can devastate an entire army of foot soldiers – that is, if they don't screw up. They are very slow and take a long time to reload, which leaves them very vulnerable if you don't have backup support nearby.

Deceiver (g)

A Fallen Lord that was only mentioned in Myth, the Deceiver appears in one of the single-player levels in Myth 2. You'll have to find him within a certain time frame.

Warlock (h)

Donning an ominous black robe, the Warlock conjures an awesome long-range weapon: the heat-seeking fireball. Warlocks have a manna bar above their heads, as do other units that use magic, which is visible when the unit is selected. Mana is needed to cast spells and regenerates while the unit remains idle. His gratifying special attack will confuse enemies, leaving them about as effective as a flock of confused bunny rabbits.

THE DESERT BETWEEN YOUR EARS ▶ 2 STARTING LOCATIONS: OUTRAGEOUS CARNAGE (4)

A map converted from the original *Myth*, a barren desert that has two gigantic battalions at opposite ends is the stage where a massacre of huge proportions is highly probable. Because the number of units is so large, team play is most appropriate and extremely fun. The arid soil of the desert makes flaming arrows worthless, but the overall potential for carnage here is extremely high. The land bridge is where it's at!

PROVING GROUNDS ▶ 6 STARTING LOCATIONS: OUTRAGEOUS CARNAGE (5)

The Proving Grounds is a small coliseum that adds a little bit of luck into the *Myth 2* equation. The mortar dwarves are your key to success. While they are very powerful, landing a hit is sometimes very frustrating; they tend to be very slow, their aim is sometimes poor, and the dud factor rears its annoying head too often. With six players, this one gets ugly fast!

GIMBLE ON THE WABE ▶ 6 STARTING LOCATIONS: HIGH CARNAGE (6)

A formidably-sized grassland latticed with streams and sandy beaches, this map has an excellently balanced selection of units for its terrain. Stygian Knights are your toughest adversaries, as arrows don't affect them at all, but they burn just like any other unit, so keep them safe from the certain death of flaming arrows by placing them in sand or water. Try to reach the hill at the center for an excellent advantage, even when surrounded.

Each battle leaves a trail of blood and raw beef large enough to feed a hungry pack of wolves for a week!

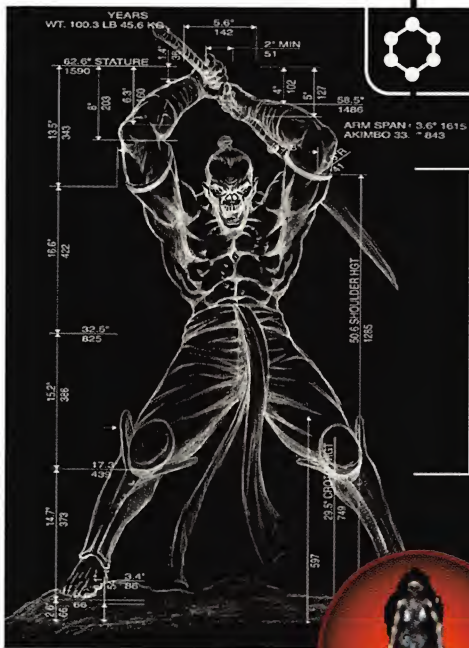
NEW WAYS OF KILLING!

ASSASSINATION

Each player or team must assassinate the enemies' leader. Each assassination awards points to the perpetrator, but losing your leader subtracts points.

HUNTING

Track and hunt the various forms of wildlife on the map. The player who successfully hunts the most wins. Now *Myth* players can get a glimpse of why those annoying hunting games are at the top!



Zombie (j)

An emaciated undead being, the Zombie is much quicker and tougher than the shambling, chaotic wight. He attacks by throwing poisonous puss onto his victims, which causes paralysis, and then slaps them around while they stand frozen and defenseless. Hand-to-hand combat is not recommended. (see previous page for image)

Shiver (l)

A hideous, shriveled hag who had us cringing at her mere image. Shiver is one of the Fallen Lords who was mentioned in the first game. She was in command of many of the undead that you faced in the early battles, but this time around you meet her face to face. Unfortunately, she makes Medusa look appealing.

Myrkridian (giant and small) (k)

A huge lycanthropic beast, Myrkridia can throw a handful of grenades, causing unprecedented damage. When out of ammunition, they attack by swiping at the enemy, causing severe lacerations with their huge claws. These monsters are fast and durable - don't attack unless you outnumber them three to one.

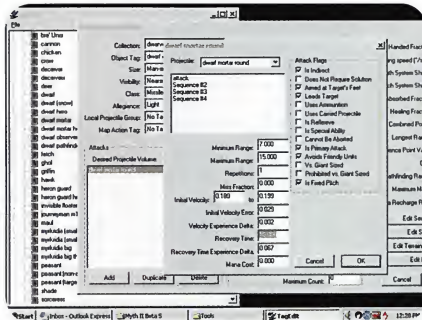
Summoner (l)

We know for a fact that the Summoner will be a part of *Myth 2*'s plot, but details are sketchy. He looks eerily familiar to the Grim Reaper.

Deer (m)

Likely created as an unfortunate participant in the multiplayer mode, Hunting.

While the multiplayer aspect of *Myth 2* is truly exceptional, the single-player game presents even more carnage and often puts you in ridiculous predicaments that seem hopeless. Wave after wave of undead approach you, often having you outnumbered 50 to 1! The dramatic back story adds the same nice touch to the overall experience that the original *Myth* did, which will be told through darkly toned, anime-inspired animation sequences produced by Anime International Company (AIC). But most important, the missions themselves are more creative and diverse. Next month, we'll show you just how badly the odds are against you in a complete rundown of some of the single-player missions. Until then, "Make a Hole!" ☹



Bungie were hailed by the Macintosh community for developing their games with the consumer in mind. *Myth 2* will come equipped with a pair of fully-featured editing tools – cleverly dubbed Fear and Loathing – that will enable players to control just about every aspect of the game. Fear (shown upper-left) was designed to modify attributes



of *Myth 2*. For example, you can create archers who shoot flaming chickens or mortar dwarves who launch wight heads from their cannons! Loathing is a map editor/creator that grants users the ability to cast and create their own theatres of pain!

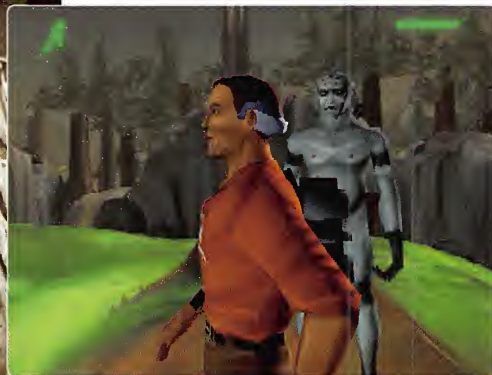
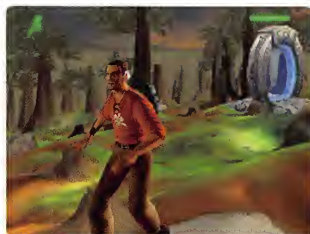


MYTH II



OUTCAST

BY BRADY FIECHTER



*What may lie beyond the powerful depths of a black hole?
Discover the answers in this cinematic interpretation*

One of the greatest gifts video games have to offer is their ability to show us entirely new worlds – alternate realities only our dreams can evoke. The world of *Outcast* is similar to such a dream, a beautiful and surreal landscape where fantastical beings lead their lives in the contrast of luminous regions rich in organic growth, and lonely, arid stretches of rocky valleys and cliffs. Awash in wonder and imagination, the visuals are inspired by the story that places us in the role of Cutter Slade, the leader of a U.S. infantry unit sent to retrieve a team of explorers lost in a parallel universe resting beyond a great black hole.

The adventure begins on the rim of a 3D world, Adelpha, which is comprised of six nonlinear regions populated by 21 different entities. Highly evolved and displaying a formidable intelligence, these creatures have developed massive cities where Slade can explore. If the inhabitants are treated kindly, they will offer assistance depending on the situation, but if provoked, some will flee, and others will attack with relentless

force. Action elements are definitely part of the total experience, but interacting intelligently with the beings of this strange land is imperative to travelling deeper through its compelling construct.

As we journey farther through *Outcast's* world, characters continue to evolve and reflect the spirit of the community and its outlying regions. The burgeoning land of Lumina houses temples and farmland, its people tranquil and inviting. An enigmatic city, Okriana is at the heart of the world, offering rich trade with its many merchants, artisans and artists.

One of the aspirations of the *Outcast* team is to envelope the game with an inimitable movie-like quality, to transport the player into Adelpha and invite them to lose themselves in its wonder. By concentrating on the crucial soundscapes in the game and employing the services of the 81-piece Moscow Symphony Orchestra and a 24-person choir, the team has already shown that it knows more than most on how to accomplish such a goal. ✧

Man an agile battletank with weapons of mass destruction... This little tank is more dangerous than Metal Gear Rex!

The continuous action in *Recoil* suggests that the game was not created for those who like to take breaks. It is not for those who enjoy a relaxing, slow-paced experience. And forget about those who think they can focus on more than one thing at a time. *Recoil* demands your undivided attention. Piloting a futuristic, heavy battle tank that has a maximum road speed of 100 km/hr, powerslides around corners, jumps across building rooftops, transforms into a hovercraft or submarine when entering aquatic environments, and launches an assortment of devastating projectiles including self-propelled nuclear missiles leaves little room for distraction. Described by many as "Quake with tanks," this game is shaping up to be an intense experience that provides a heavy dose of action and a bit of strategy to escape the danger of monotony.

Recoil's style is immediately apparent: the constant in-your-face battles keep the pace frenetic from your very first maneuver. While your tank whips

around the battlefield, it controls more like a high-powered rally car. But you're here to wage war, not race. Turning other combat vehicles into fiery showers of shrapnel has never been so fun. Laser cannons, proximity mines, and flamethrowers decorate the battlefield with showers of light and chunks of steel and concrete.

Keeping gameplay fresh, *Recoil* throws a good deal of hidden areas, alternate routes and even puzzles into the mix, and some require experimentation to uncover. Break through tattered walls and destroy a hidden force-field controller, atomize support pillars and use a partially fallen roof as a ramp to higher ground, or take an alternate route to a nude beach, where you'll find some repair icons and perhaps some time to relax and enjoy the exceptionally beautiful scenery. This game will not classify as a tank simulation—I guarantee it. ☺

RECOIL

BY DAVEREES



Blizzard's phenomenal success with *Starcraft* came as no surprise. The much-anticipated RTS smash was an instant success, selling over a million copies worldwide and dominating the PC charts for many months. An awesome engine, superb presentation, three incredibly unique races and, most important, perfect gameplay and balance conspired to create the most accomplished RTS game to date.

Blizzard haven't been resting on their laurels, however, and have been hard at work on *Brood War*, the first of two planned expansion packs. Currently under testing, *Brood War* is set to stir the *Starcraft* pot into a frenzy once more with all-new campaigns, new units, new upgrades, new tilesets and an extensive overhaul to the established *Starcraft* gameplay.

The new units are superb creations and have been designed to eliminate certain weak points that have surfaced through months of heated Battle Net action. Zerg now boast an improved air-to-air unit with the Devourer. Zerg base defense is also vastly improved with the new Lurker upgrade, which turns a Hydralisk into a burrowing killing machine that skewers its foes

with sharp spines. The Terran and Protoss races also have new units, and together they make a considerable impact on existing strategies throughout the game. Expect your conventional build order to change quite a bit to take into account the new surprises the enemy has in store for you!

Starcraft has already benefited from several downloadable patches that go as far as fixing some bugs and adjusting balance, but *Brood War* takes it one step further. Many units have either been altered, toned down, increased in cost, vastly improved or generally brought into line so that no one race has any unfair advantage over another. Underused units like the Ultralisk receive upgrades to make them worthwhile. Expect all those "waste-of-money" units that rarely made an appearance to become a lot more common in *Brood War*.

Only multiplayer is functional at the moment, but it is already clear that *Brood War* has all the essential ingredients necessary to keep *Starcraft* at the top of the rapidly expanding RTS heap for many more months to come.



PROTOS
CORSAIR

System Warning:
Zerg Intruders detected

starcraft:broodwar



STARCRAFT:
BROOD WAR
BY GARY HARROD



TORMENT

BY BRADY FIECHTER

When you wake up in what appears to be a pestilent afterlife, pleasantries are the last thing on your mind

If there's some higher power that controls my fate, I would like to meet him, shake his hand, then crack open his ribcage and tear out his heart." — The Unknown One

Comments like this do not grant you favors from God. That the irascible Unknown One has found himself awakening disfigured beyond recognition on a cold slab of stone in a morgue is proof of this. Exactly how this poor soul landed himself in the land of the dead is a mystery, and finding the answers to this puzzle — Who is he? What plane of existence has he actually fallen into? What does the future hold? — is the focus of *Planescape: Torment*, an isometric RPG that draws off the *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* rules system.

Built on the foundations of the impressive Bioware Infinity Engine from *Baldur's Gate*, the elaborate city of Sigil serves as the nerve center of the game, transporting players through a maze of streets and portals that lead to infinite points in the Planescape universe. In an attempt to separate this setting from typical TSR worlds, the artists of the game are searching for a sharp, gritty, adult-oriented atmosphere in which sickening moments of violence haunt the player.

When exploring the fantastical universe, Unknown One meets its motley inhabitants,

befriending them for aid in the twisted quest. The people he comes in contact with open up the story, revealing that many of them, in some way, have had their lives affected by him in the past. It is the swirling mystery in *Torment* that is at the heart of its appeal.

Starting out basically powerless, Unknown One can eventually call upon his knowledge of 25th-level experiences, which allows him to cast powerful spells, utilize priest and thief attributes, and use warrior skills usually locked out to a character of his inferior status. Once a formidable opponent, the memories of the past serve as Unknown One's strength, imbuing him with the ability to break free from the shackles of his initial weaknesses. The path for character growth is entirely up to the player, and the actions unique to individual playing styles are what ultimately determines Unknown One's form — the character generation screen is the game.

But let's not forget the morbid violence: pluck out eyes, dump victims into razor patches, evoke flesh eating grubs inside a person's brain, use a downed foe's carcass for armor. Anything goes in a game in which the protagonist can "shrug off decapitation." ❄





SHADOW MADNESS


DEVELOPER: CRAVE PUBLISHER: CRAVE AVAILABLE: WINTER

American companies rarely commit themselves to in-depth console RPGs, but Crave has taken the initiative with *Shadow Madness*. And although many people have shamelessly compared it to *FFVII* recently, *Shadow Madness* incorporates a much different theme and style. Granted, its rendered backdrops and 3D battles are highly reminiscent of *FFVII*, but what better game to base an RPG on than one of the all-time best? Besides, if *Shadow Madness* turns out to be an enjoyable RPG, don't we all benefit?

Despite the heavy-duty ongoing advertising campaign Crave has for *Shadow Madness*, the game itself is still very early (just approaching the pre-beta phase, as a matter of fact). There's quite a bit to see and play thus far, but several elements, such as collision and frame rates, have yet to be fully optimized. Regardless, *Shadow Madness* is set to deliver over 40 hours of classic menu-driven gameplay, starring the orphaned Stinger and his newly found soulmate, Windleaf. You'll roam the land of Arkose on foot and, when travel becomes too harsh, you'll climb aboard gliders and various watercraft to continue your journey.

Shadow Madness has countless fully rendered environments, some more detailed than others, but all meticulously drawn by a dedicated team of 10 artists. The *FFVII*-style

battles load asynchronously in seconds from the pre-rendered maps to fully polygonal real-time battles. Crave intends to provide spectacular spellcasting effects as well as increasingly difficult (larger, nastier) polygonal creatures to battle in tandem with a dedicated weapon and skill-based level-up system. At its core, the battle menu seems to be a well-conceived turn-based system, very similar to proven RPGs of the past.


We're anxiously awaiting a final version of *Shadow Madness* here at GR, if only to see how Crave's ambitious design turns out. 



BLAST RADIUS
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE: Q1 '99

"Is that *Colony Wars*?" was something I had to hear more than a few times while checking out *Blast Radius* from Psygnosis. And whether Psygnosis would be terribly pleased by this or not, it does use the very same engine and, at first glance, the two indeed look similar. But *Blast Radius*' raison d'être is fast, arcade action. There's none of that pesky, deep storyline to concern yourself with or complex mission objectives. The aim here is non-stop destruction.

Befitting the action-oriented nature of this particular title, there are powerups to collect from fallen craft and money to be earned from the very same destruction. After each mission, you can purchase upgraded weapons and shields to further your destructive aims. You're also given a choice of multitasking attack craft at the start of the game. Also on tap (but not yet functional) will be a two-player link-up mode of some sort.


It's perhaps a little curious that Psygnosis are bringing out a title so closely related to their own *Colony Wars*. There must have been many who felt that *CW* was too complex and that its wondrous 3D engine could use its own action game. Review forthcoming. 



INDIANA JONES: THE INFERNAL MACHINE
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: LUCAS ARTS AVAILABLE: Q1 '99

Almost ten years ago, in 1989, Indiana Jones made his last expedition, his "Last Crusade." That's a long time ago. Actually, when you think about it, that was the same year that the Sega Genesis was released in the U.S. Just like all things that are worth remembering, we haven't forgotten him. To make up for his absence, over the past decade there have been all sorts of games on just about every system, from the Commodore 64 to the modern-day PC, that starred the iconic action hero. Finally, we are approaching the year that Indiana will return, both on the big screen, and the little one. The upcoming 3D adventure for the PC,



Indiana Jones: The Infernal Machine will take us back to 1947, a time that celebrated the end of World War II, but also initiated the infamous Cold War between the U.S. and Soviets. But in this version of history, the balance of power is teetering on the discovery of an inter-dimensional gate that the Soviet government is close to uncovering. Maneuvering Indiana through beautiful 3D environments, players will have to prevent the Reds from gaining world dominance. 



POPULOUS: THE THIRD COMING

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: BULLFROG AVAILABLE: Q4 '99

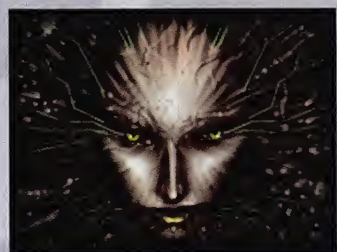
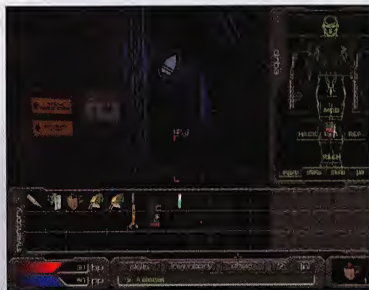
Who can deny the powerful legacy of *Populous*? For many of us, playing as God left quite an impression, but the memories have been hibernating for too long. Answering our prayers, *Populous 3* has finally been released in demo form. Rather than having a narrow isometric view of the world, the game will allow players to view the earthy planet they plan to conquer from just about any angle – including a distant satellite view from just outside the planet's atmosphere. The game also benefits dramatically from today's technology; the graphics are now breathtaking. Depicting a lush planet that exists as a true ellipsoid, including some spectacular spell effects like the tornado, a dust-filled whirlwind that lifts buildings and tribesmen into its deadly vortex, and presenting a very smooth interface that makes the game incredibly easy to pick up and play, *Populous 3* goes well beyond its predecessors. Squelching concerns about playability, the game thankfully remains true to its origins, as it still retains the same charming gameplay of the original. Everything just looks, sounds, and plays better. Nothing wrong with that. ☺



SYSTEM SHOCK 2

DEVELOPER: LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS PUBLISHER: ORIGIN AVAILABLE: WINTER

As a sequel to a game that is heralded by many as being one of the finest PC games of all time, *System Shock 2* is sure to result in something extraordinary. Submerging players in a novel 16-bit 3D world, building upon the original's science fiction inspired theme, and accented by traditional character generation and development much like that of *Ultima Underworld*, the game is destined to set a benchmark for the sci-fi RPG genre. By making some of the more traditional role-playing elements more apparent, the game's developers, Looking Glass Studios, are striving to achieve a well-balanced pure of technology and immersing gameplay – which includes radiant

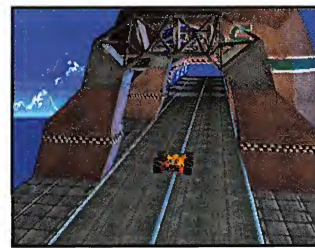


psionic powers such as Cryokinesis and Force Wall, and an unsurpassed weapon modification system that allows players to alter a weapon's power and effectiveness. Topping this off, a multiplayer mode will be intact, allowing four players to experience the engrossing adventure cooperatively. Whether or not this formula will earn the success of the original is yet to be seen, but early depictions of the game look very encouraging. ☺

ROLLCAGE

DEVELOPER: ATD PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE: MARCH '99

So, who's developing Psygnosis' futuristic racer, *Rollcage*? Here's a hint: "Avoid the ground." Yes, it's ATD! The minds behind *Cybermorph*, *Battlemorph*, and the ill-fated *Blast Chamber* are on their way to redemption with the hot-looking *Rollcage*. ATD reps explained that up to now they've been coming to grips with next-generation hardware, and now that they've created a powerful engine (it really is), they've had time to pour their heart and soul into the gameplay. After a thorough preview test of *Rollcage*, we definitely agree. This totally refreshing racer offers stunning speed, gorgeous weapon effects, and vast environments. The vehicles are reminiscent of those RC cars with big wheels (and small bodies) that can flip over and keep moving. This idea is constantly encouraged in *Rollcage*, as you drive straight up the sides of walls to find speed-burst pads and weapon powerups waiting along the tracks, which are loaded with cool areas to rocket through upside down or otherwise.



Now, about those weapons: Leader missiles seek out the first-place car, some rockets are specifically designed to destroy structures in the environment (you'll be doing lots of that), and others open powerful temporal disruptions or cause screen-melting time warps. The pyrotechnic effects, particle explosions, and gorgeous lighting are a sight to behold. Rounding out the game's list of impressive attributes, the soundtrack features some of drum & bass' best UK artists (like Ed Rush and Renegade), there's a great two-player split screen and plenty of modes to unlock. We'll be monitoring this promising March '99 release very carefully in forthcoming issues. ☺

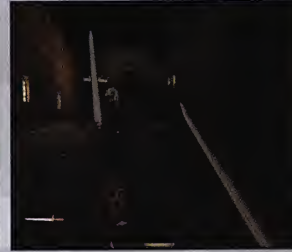
THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

DEVELOPER: LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS PUBLISHER: EIDOS AVAILABLE: WINTER

The vicious tactics of a thief are not common to most of us. We do not steal. We do not kill. We do not sneak through the dark shadows of night, looking for an innocent victim to assault. But it is likely that when Looking Glass Studios' game *Thief* is released, many of us will with childlike excitement. Destined to be a suspenseful and dark escape from reality, the game will teach many of us the way of a master thief.



Perhaps it is the ignoble nature of the quest at hand, stealing wealth from the snobby rich and killing those who try to stop you, that has many of us so excited about *Thief*: Trying to slip past guards, remaining undetected, and pillage what is not rightfully yours; slinking through dimly lit ancient cities, guarded mansions, secured prisons, and even creepy catacombs to mug a weary aristocrat. But making such an experience authentic requires an engine that is capable of some amazing feats. Dubbed the Dark Engine, *Thief*'s 3D technology is said to allow for unrivaled freedom in a world that truly seems alive. Nature's elements behave as they should: wood catches fire, buoyancy affects objects when in water, other objects can be used creatively to impede your enemy's progress. Even sound will play an imperative role in aiding many of your tactics. If the gameplay and engine live up to the hype, *Thief* should be a haunting experience at the very least. ☺



You're traveling through a darkened school hallway, the consuming void pierced only by your flashlight, when you suddenly hear...scampering. You squint your eyes, trying to see beyond the boundaries of your flashlight, ready to draw your weapon at a moment's notice. Instinctively you whirl around, sure that the terror is stalking you from behind, yet other than a few splatters of blood smeared on the tile floor, nothing seems to be amiss. Relieved, you turn back around, ready to find the exit to this damned structure, only to face several small demons bounding towards you from the blackness. You fire your weapon, but the empty click of your gun's hammer confirms your fears – no more bullets! You sprint back the way you came, switching off your flashlight, knowing these bastards who are chasing you can see the illumination. Turning a corner you throw yourself into the first room you come upon and sit there in the darkness, wiping off your sweaty palms, thankful to have escaped. That's when you hear breathing, and realize you're not alone...

Welcome to *Silent Hill*. OK, let's get the obvious out of the way first. It's not hard to guess which game influenced Konami to create their latest offering, but those who quickly label *Silent Hill* nothing more than a *Resident Evil* clone have one hell of a surprise coming. While the original *Resident Evil* felt like an action/horror movie and *RE2* more

like...well, just an action movie, *Silent Hill* promises to deliver quite a different experience. Actually, *SH* promises to deliver fear. And not just that dog-jumping-through-the-window heart skip we all loved about *Resident Evil*. I'm talking about true terror. In *Silent Hill*, you won't be wondering how many zombies are in that next room; you'll be too busy frantically sweeping your flashlight back and forth across the darkness, hoping to God nothing stumbles into your line of vision. You see, for Konami, this game is about a lot more than just trying to make you crap your pants with random surprises; they want you to feel horrified. They want you to play with the lights on. They want you to feel the pain the main character experiences, and they want you to go to sleep with that on your mind. They want to make a game you won't soon forget. Damn, I love this company.

Of course, *Silent Hill* has its share of action. There are weapons to collect, bosses to encounter, and areas to explore – but, once again, unlike *Resident Evil*, this is an entirely new process. Comprised totally of texture-mapped polygons, the backgrounds might not have the detail found in Capcom's classic, but thanks to constantly changing camera angles, the environments have a much more dynamic look. Now, when you turn around, so does the camera: it rises above you when running through cramped spaces, pans away to alert you to something on the other end of the room, and at times spins in awkward angles to give effect. There is also an ample amount of super-realistic CG to further heighten the gameplay experience, music that truly changes with the game's content, and a storyline that promises to be as complex as anything you'll read by Stephen King. And all of this directed by a man who, until this project, knew nothing of horror.



It's a known fact – people like CG. Sure, a lot of us claim to despise the “pre-rendered devil” while clutching our N64s tightly, but seeing how game companies are buying up CG artists like mad, enough of us must be duped by the pretty pictures to justify their high costs. Yet, unlike companies like Square and Namco, whose artists collectively outweigh the populace of a small country, Konami approached the CG element of their latest game in a slightly different style – they hired one man. That's right, one man! A single human being created all of the rendered images you see here. Bow down!

SILENT HILL

BY RYAN LOCKHART

*What's going on in this small town?
Prepare to face your darkest fears...*

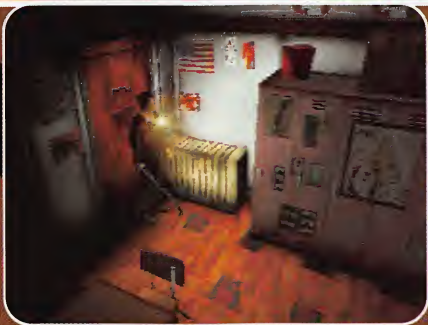




STORYLINE:

It all takes place in a really foggy town. Scary, eh? OK, there might be a bit more than that. From what we can tell, the basic story goes something like this: It all begins with you wanting to take your daughter to a quaint little vacation town by the name of Silent Hill. On your way there, something stumbles out of the fog onto the road, and you swerve to avoid hitting whatever it was...and crash. When you come to, not only do you realize your flipped car is now a wreck, but your daughter is missing as well. With nowhere else to go, you wander into the town of Silent Hill, and find it void of people. Thinking you see your daughter walking into an alleyway, you follow and are killed by a bunch of small demons.

Really, you die – isn't that cool? Well, in any case, you wake up in a diner with a cop...and that's where Konami stopped talking. Hmmm... A diner.



SILENT HILL™

*Death... and rebirth awaits you at this quaint vacation spot...
Can you handle the horror you'll soon experience?*

This is the part that confuses me. It's strange how *Silent Hill*'s director, a person who claims to have never been a horror buff, could come up with some of the situations you'll find in *Silent Hill*. Skinned bodies hanging off wire fences, nurses with growths on their backs stumbling after you in rusty hospitals, the pools of blood and flesh that seem to be everywhere... Some of this work would make Clive Barker shiver, and is sure to give kids (and at least one magazine journalist) night-

mares for weeks after the adventure is finished. I normally like to play games like *Resident Evil*, *Eo*, and *Dark Messiah* at night with the lights off – you know, because it's fun to be scared – but *Silent Hill* might change that for me. And as much as I hate to admit it, the genre of Survival Horror has a new player on the field, one that could redefine the way we look at "terror" games forever. At any rate, I'm looking forward to the experience. 爰

SILENT HILL INTERVIEW:

GR: WHERE DID THE INSPIRATION FOR THE STORY COME FROM?

The idea came from the corporate side, which thought they should make a horror game. They asked Mr. Toyama if he was interested in working on the project. At this time he didn't know that much about horror, so he started his homework looking at what sort of horror people enjoyed, and found out that modern horror was getting the most acceptance, and from there created the theme and storyline. He found out that most people enjoyed situation horror where you'd find yourself in a real-world-type setting, but for some reason it's different – real dark or real foggy. He wanted to build on these feelings by creating a “normal” American town, and create the horror image from there and build on it.

HOW LARGE IS THE TEAM WORKING ON SILENT HILL?

At the largest point there were 20 people on this project, but the actual group that worked on the framework of the game was 7 to 10 people; the rest were designer assistants.

IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR AUDIENCE YOU HAD IN MIND FOR SILENT HILL?

Stop with the trick questions, you know what audience we're going after! [laughter] Putting aside the first *BioHazard* (*Resident Evil*), *BioHazard 2* went very Hollywood-like, very action oriented. Instead of a

horror game, it felt more like an action movie. With *Silent Hill*, we tried to go back to the roots of what horror is supposed to be about; we want to make you scared on the instinctive level.

SO, DO YOU ENVISION PEOPLE PLAYING THIS GAME WITH THE LIGHTS OFF?

No, we were kind of hoping to make it scary enough you would want to play *Silent Hill* during the daytime with all your lights on! [laughter]

HOW MUCH GAMEPLAY DOES SILENT HILL HAVE?

This depends on how good people are at solving the puzzles, but it's looking like 6 to 8 hours if you know exactly where to go and what to do. It should take a first-time player up to twice this length. There are also hidden secrets and bonuses when you beat the game, inspiring replay value.



“We want to scare people on the instinctive level...”



GOZO HITAO

PRODUCER

Former credits include:
Hyper Olympics, *Mitsumete Night*



KEIICHI TOYAMA

DIRECTOR, SCENERIO WRITER

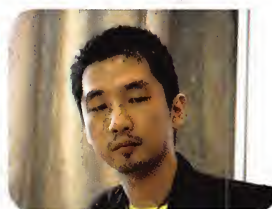
Former credits include:
Hyper Olympics



TAKAYOSHI SATO

CHARACTER DESIGN, CG

Former credits include:
Being a student



AKIRA YAMNOKA

MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS

Former credits include:
Vandal Hearts, *Poy Poy*, contributed to *Suikoden*

ARE THERE ANY OTHER MAJOR CHARACTERS IN SILENT HILL? DO YOU EVER CONTROL ANY OF THEM?

There are seven other main characters in the game, and while we can't tell you much about them yet, let's just say you'll meet them many times throughout the game and discover their interesting backgrounds. No, you'll never control anyone else.

WILL THERE BE DIFFERENT ENDINGS?

There will be one underlying story throughout the whole game, but there will be multiple endings: The good ending, the bad ending, and, if it comes down to it, dying and finishing off the game with another ending... sort of.

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY DIFFICULTIES WITH PUTTING SILENT HILL ON THE PLAYSTATION, ESPECIALLY WITH THE DYNAMIC CAMERA ANGLES?

We had a few problems, mainly because there is no Z-buffering in the hardware itself, and when you start playing with the camera angles, the priorities change. In a normal action game, this isn't a problem, because you don't have to worry about the atmosphere too much. But in making a horror game, we wanted to make sure that atmosphere is preserved throughout the whole game – and that's where the major problems came in with the camera angles.

SPEAKING OF THOSE CAMERA ANGLES, WHERE DID YOU GET THE IDEA TO MAKE THEM THAT DYNAMIC? ARE THERE ANY CERTAIN FILM DIRECTORS YOU ADMIRE?

Not really. There's nothing we've seen that's really like this. Think of it as “Toyama-style.” When we were working on the concept of modern horror, we were trying to figure out how to give the game an “unbalanced-world” feeling. These camera angles seemed to fit best, as it gave the game a cinematic style.

THIS GAME SEEMS TO BE VERY DEPENDENT ON THE FLASHLIGHT. CAN YOU EVER LOSE IT?

We were playing around with the flashlight in early versions of the game, thinking about letting you drop or lose it, but then we discovered it's almost impossible to play *Silent Hill* without it; you would get lost in the dark. So, the flashlight itself cannot be taken away, but it still acts as a very dynamic part of the game. Many areas in *Silent Hill* are very dark, but that's not to say you won't want to turn it off in certain circumstances; the enemies have eyes and ears...

HOW MANY DIFFERENT WEAPONS AND ITEMS ARE IN THE GAME AT THIS TIME?

When it comes down to it, there are very few weapons and items, because we want to keep the “real-world” feeling. You might be able to



EVEN THOUGH I THINK WE ALL KNOW THE ANSWER, BUT JUST TO GET AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE: THIS VERSION OF SILENT HILL IS DIFFERENT THAN THE ONE WE SAW AT THE E3. CAN YOU TELL US WHY THE CHANGES WERE MADE? WAS IT TO PLEASE MAINLY THE AMERICAN MARKET, OR FOR THE JAPANESE MARKET AS WELL?

The creatures of the game... are a difficult issue. We want to provide the consumers with a sense of horror, but not revulsion. There are images associated with horror that this company does not want to be associated with. This is a sensitive issue at any time, but more so recently... [ed's note: The version we saw at the E3 had enemies that looked like skinned children. These have been changed into small demons]

HOW FAR ALONG IS SILENT HILL?

It is very hard to say what percentage the game is done. The base part is together and now it's just up to them to put it together and flesh it out. If you had to put a number on it: 70 percent.

WHEN CAN WE ACTUALLY EXPECT TO PLAY SILENT HILL?

We are planning to have the game ready by spring. The main thing is, we don't want to have this project rushed. *Silent Hill* is very important to Konami, and we want it to be perfect. For the American release date, look for an announcement at the E3.

ABOUT THE CG:

IS THE GAME BROKEN UP BY FMV SCENES?

There is about 10 minutes of rendered CG, which includes the opening and ending. We won't tell you the exact amount of cut scenes, but let's just say they're spread liberally throughout the game. Of course, there are many other major storyline events that are displayed in game graphics, and nearly all of these have voices (in English) to accompany them.

IS IT TRUE THAT ALL THIS CG WAS DONE BY ONE PERSON?

Yes!

find a shotgun or a handgun from a police officer, but that's about it. You won't find any Uzis lying on the ground.

ALSO, ABOUT THE ITEMS, ARE YOU PLANNING ON INCORPORATING THEIR PLACEMENT WITH THE "REALISTIC" VISION OF THE GAME? WILL HEALTH ITEMS, FOR EXAMPLE, BE IN PLACES YOU'D NORMALLY FIND THEM (FIRST AID KITS AND THE SUCH), OR WILL THEY JUST BE SCATTERED AROUND ON THE GROUND IN RANDOM AREAS?

We are planning on placing items where you'd expect to find them, but you must remember, this is a game... So they will be spread around liberally, as opposed to having specific spots where you have to travel to find. If you do that, the game becomes more of a mission to find items, and that's not what we want the atmosphere of the game to reflect.

CAN WE EXPECT ANY RANDOM ELEMENTS IN THE GAME? WILL MONSTERS ALWAYS BE IN THE SAME STARTING POSITIONS? WILL ITEMS EVER BE IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS?

As a general rule, the game will be balanced the whole way through, so you can essentially expect the positions to always stay the same; there won't be many random things that change every time you play. However, we will retain a few random elements to help give *Silent Hill* replay value.

SPEAKING OF THE ENEMIES IN SILENT HILL, ARE YOU PLANNING TO GIVE THEM ANY KIND OF BASIC AI? WILL THEY ADAPT TO YOUR PLAYING ABILITY? ARE THERE ANY VARIABLES?

We have certainly thought about the balancing aspects, but we haven't thought about it from the enemy perspective – rather more in the item area. We are planning on giving the player more ammo and such if he's having trouble in the game.

ANY PLANS TO HAVE SILENT HILL UTILIZE THE POCKET STATION?

For this product, no.

COULD YOU GIVE US THE AVERAGE TIME IT TAKES TO RENDER A MINUTE OF CG, FROM DESIGN TO FINAL PRODUCT?

[laughter] Um, I'll let you do the math on this one: One second of rendering time takes 3 to 4 hours, but if you take in the time it takes for the actual design, much longer. Let's just say I haven't slept much since I started work here...

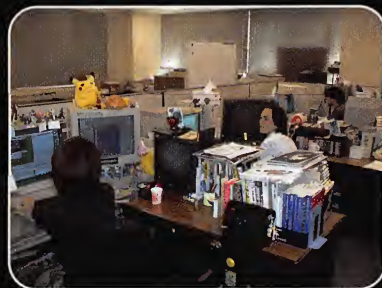
WHEN WAS THAT?

I joined the company three years ago, but didn't start with the game until a year later, so that gives you an idea.

WHAT KIND OF SOFTWARE/HARDWARE WAS USED FOR CREATING THE CG?

The CG was created using Softimage 3D, and when I first started working on this project all I had was a single (Silicon Graphics) Indy 5000. Of course, after the company saw the amount of work I was doing, they bought me a much faster machine.

This interview was done live at Konami's Tokyo Headquarters, and featured questions by myself and other members of the international gaming press. I would like to thank those journalists, Jon Sloan, Ken Ogasawara, the entire Silent Hill team, and the rest of Konami Japan for making this possible.





Troop Section

Escape Hvy
Command
Sensor Ar
Command
Viper
Medium-
Blaster
Heavy
Laser CanFlexible A
(for Cock)Footpad
Too Flip

Mark Haigh-Hutchinson commented, "We had a great number of people remark that their favorite aspect of *Shadows of the Empire* was the first stage on Hoth with the Snow Speeder." That's how it all started for Mark (project leader) and his team as they listened to the public opinions, and decided that the next *Star Wars* game, *Rogue Squadron*, should be based purely around piloting rebel craft in order to provide top shooting action in the classic Lucas universe.

The result of 16 months of hard work has at last paid off, and recently I was invited to attend a play-test session at LucasArts in San Rafael, CA. *Rogue Squadron* is the third game to be officially announced that supports the N64 4-Meg RAM pack, making it a veritable showcase for other developers in the community. The extra RAM allowed Mark to implement a high-resolution mode (giving the appearance of a first-generation PC accelerated game), which, once seen in action, really allows the N64 to bask in graphical

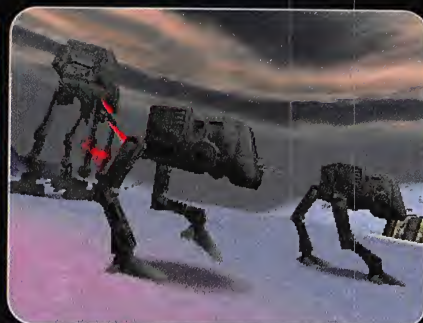
magnificence (just check out the shots for proof). Unfortunately, once you become accustomed to the hi-res mode, you will certainly notice a difference in all other N64 games, and perhaps even become slightly annoyed that the majority of other games don't look this good.

Rogue Squadron drops you into the well-worn boots of the soon-to-be Jedi Master, Luke Skywalker, in a time frame found somewhere between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. The ever-present Imperial shadow threatens the existence of the Rebels, and it is your job to take to the air and stop them dead in their tracks. Joined by familiar allies such as Wedge Antilles and Han Solo, you battle your way through 16 stages of mission-based shooting action in order to achieve victory. Locations include Tatooine, Kessel, and Mon Calamari (some of which have only been seen before in *Star Wars* comic books), and players will be required to dogfight the evil Empire within these locales.

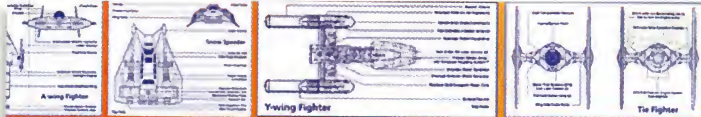
*The rebels are once again rising against the wrath of the Empire!
Luke Skywalker is back, and it's time to bring the Empire down!*

ROGUE SQUADRON

BY BRYN WILLIAMS



(Above) Check out the insane hi-res graphics. Luke must pilot this V-Wing around Cloud City (the multi-level cloud effects look stunning!).



QUADRON




*Experience 16 exciting levels and locations with Wedge and Han!
Guide your squadron over retina-burning landscapes at insane speeds!*



Advanced pilots should make use of the H.U.D. within the cockpit. Fly the Y-Wings on bombing missions.

In order to extend game longevity, LucasArts have implemented a medal award scheme (similar to the one found in *Mario Kart 64*) for completion of levels, enabling you to free-up different spacecraft for use on different levels. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded depending on how competently you complete the stages (with time limits, civilian casualties and enemy targets all being factors). You are able to fly X-Wings, Y-Wing bombers, Snow Speeders, and even a new V-Wing, taken from the comic book series. The actual flight physics and controls are excellent and cater to beginners and experts alike, allowing easy self-centering control or realistic yoke flight. Flight environments are very realistic and pay attention to detail extremely well (you can even see Jabba's palace whilst trying to prevent Mos Eisley from being destroyed by TIE Bombers!), and the only real problem graphically is that the game seems to experience some pretty harsh draw-in on the distant landscapes. Happily, this never really interferes with the gameplay, and only the length of each level stops this from being a truly epic title. If you were to try and claim gold medals on all the stages, the overall game length would probably be near to 20 hours,

which isn't that bad.

LucasArts' *Rogue Squadron* is a solid, upstanding shooter and deserves much success on the N64. After all, who can resist a *Star Wars* title in glorious hi-res with exciting, adrenaline-pumping action? The future of the N64 has definitely been given a much-needed shot in the arm, thanks to the RAM pack, and it will be interesting to see if hi-res becomes the norm rather than the exception. LucasArts should be congratulated for tackling an ambitious project like this, and given the overall improvement over *Shadows of the Empire*, I look forward to getting a final review copy ASAP. 



*As the biggest on-line RPG nears completion...
We go one-on-one with the Lead Programmer of this brave new world!*

EVERQUEST

BY DAVID HODGSON



SCOTT CLOVER: LEAD PROGRAMMER OF EVERQUEST

How long has EverQuest been in development?
Approximately two-and-a-half years.

Please, could you take us through the basics of gameplay?
First you create a character (on-line persona), choosing from a wide variety of races (such as Humans, Elves, and Trolls) and classes (like Warriors, Bards, Clerics, etc.). Once you have decided who you want to be, you enter the world and are placed within a hometown to begin your adventures. What follows is really up to the player. He or she can spend their hours delving into dark dungeons in search of treasure, talking with friends while fishing, going on a short quest that might only take an hour to complete, or going off on a quest that takes you all over the world and requires days to finish. There is no lack of things to do, places to explore, or people (and monsters) to meet.

Is the character loaded in from a server, or from a player's PC?
All characters reside on our servers only.

Why did you opt to develop a hardware engine only, and no software engine?

We started out software only, largely because there was no hardware standard to speak of at the time. But once the 3DFX chipset was presented to us, we decided that 3D hardware was the way of the future. The software engine was just holding us back, and since we wanted to make *EverQuest* the best it could possibly be, we had to dump the software version and go hardware only. I think we made a great choice, and I think our customers will agree with us.

An obvious comparison is a huge on-line version of the Dungeons & Dragons role-playing game. Is this fair?

EverQuest is a role-playing game, and many of us on the team grew up playing *D&D*, but *EverQuest* is not *D&D*, it is a completely original rule base that we designed ourselves. Also, *D&D* was just a couple of friends getting together with some rule books and their imaginations, but *EverQuest* is a living, breathing, on-line community of thousands of people depicted in rich, colorful 3D. We are bringing things only imagined, or written down on paper, to life.



scottclover:ue



The PK feature is an obvious advantage, as is the comprehensive beta testing which is ongoing. Please comment on how these features help the game, and those that a player hasn't been able to experience before.

The PK issue is hotly debated, but many people (the EverQuest team especially) feel that players killing other players is best left to action games like *Quake 2* that are not persistent worlds. In *Quake*, the game is to run around and rack up the most kills, and if you get killed there are no lasting implications – you just pop right back into the world and grab another rocket launcher. In *EverQuest* there can be huge, lasting implications to death. *EverQuest* is not about running over powerups and fragging people until your mouse hand cramps up (although I have personally done that in id's games, and have loved every minute of it). You can easily spend months advancing your character's career in *EverQuest*, amassing a huge fortune, honing your skills to mastery, and gathering powerful artifacts. Many people are just not interested in losing all of that hard work in a few seconds to some jerks standing outside of town who get their laughs from killing people that are weaker and looting them. If the customer is interested in playing that way, then they can choose to do that, but others who are not interested won't have their gameplay experience ruined. We let the customer choose – we don't force it upon them.

What is the maximum number of players that can simultaneously log on to a particular world?

Right now we are looking at approximately 1,500 players, but that may change.

Do you have the capacity to keep expanding?

Absolutely. We will be ready to bring additional servers on line in a moment's notice.

What problems have you faced with the sheer size of the project and the freedom a character has?

RPGs, in my opinion, are the biggest development project you can possibly undertake, and throwing the massively multiplayer element into the mix makes the scope stagger-

ing. Our world is immense, and the job of making that world come alive has been a huge undertaking. Our team is extremely dedicated, putting in many long hours over the last two-and-a-half years, and I don't think we could have a more talented group of individuals.

Does the game suffer when many characters congregate to an area?

With any game there is going to be frame-rate loss when too many players get on the same screen, but I think all of us here have been surprised by how well our game performs with a whole bunch of people and monsters on screen. And, since our game is hardware only, you can always buy a faster 3D card, especially since they keep dropping in price. Also, our players will be spread out much more than in other games of this type, which really helps.

EverQuest is seen primarily as a multiplayer game. How does one interact with other PCs and the world around them?

You talk to them, trade with them, go on quests with them, battle each other in an arena, and much, much, more.

Can you play the game as a single-player experience?

EverQuest does not have a true single-player mode, but you can certainly adventure alone if you so desire, although you will find that life is easier when you have some friends to watch your back.

How have the problems such as horizon drawing, number of placements (such as trees), onscreen slowdown, and the ease of using the interface been overcome?

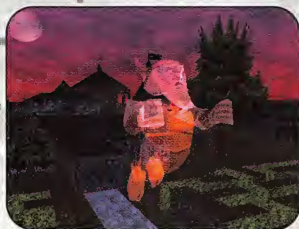
Fast hardware, great people on our team, and lots of good ol' ingenuity.

If you have a 28.8 Modem and a low-end spec PC, are you still going to be able to enjoy the experience?

Your computer must at least meet, but preferably exceed, the minimum hardware requirements. Certainly the fastest computer and video card on the market will turn in much better frame rates, but that being said, the game runs pretty well on our minimum machine. And, I play from home using my 28.8 modem with no problems.

How have you created NPC and monster AI? What can players look forward to when interacting with computer-controlled opponents?

Blood-thirsty hordes of monsters of nearly every kind imaginable hunting you down mercilessly. You can run like a little child, but you can't hide! Well... unless you're a rogue!



Are there disadvantages or advantages to a certain style of play?

There is not just one way to play *EverQuest*. Different things work for different people, and I think our world is open-ended enough to accommodate the personal styles of all of our customers.

How many different characters and classes are there?

There are 12 playable races and 14 playable classes.

How is animosity dealt with?

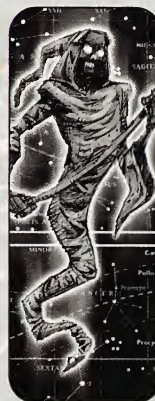
Players will deal with animosity between themselves and other players on their own, unless they require assistance from us, in which case one of our on-line staff members (known as GMs) will deal with the problem swiftly. In-character animosity, such as a Paladin hating evil Necromancers, is part of the game, but real-world-style harassment will not be tolerated.

Is the game a simple matter of ganging up on monsters and leveling up, or are other skills required? Please mention stuff like fishing, sewing and other skills and their relation to the game.

EverQuest has many different skills, some combat related and some not. We have fishing, baking, and many more... Heck, you can even brew your own beer! But, unlike other games before us, the player is never forced into doing these things; they will do them if they want to, not because they have to. You can jump right into ridding the countryside of evil nasties, or you can just fish and talk with your friends for awhile. It's all up to the player.

Can you, for example, build your own castle?

Too early to say at this point, but there will not be a huge wash of player homes covering the landscape in our world.



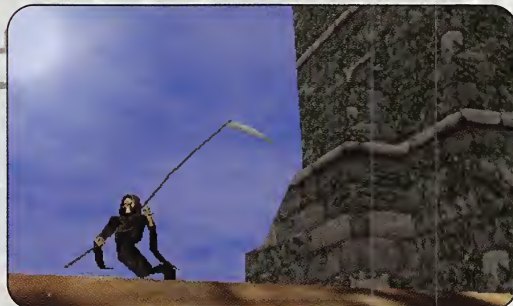
What can a player look forward to at extremely high levels?

Many things, but I will leave that for our players to discover on their own.

Is there really a total freedom of movement? How have you achieved this?

Yep, you can run, jump, swim, and even levitate all over the world.

Thank you very much! ☺



*Fully 3D and gigantically enormous worlds await!
Join thousands of fantasy inhabitants in a massive life simulation!*

read progre

EA delivers...
the ultimate finishing move!

THRILL KILL

THRILL KILL

BY MIKE GRIFFIN

Many mistakes have been made in this industry lately, but EA's decision to can *Thrill Kill* takes the proverbial cake. As this is being written, a few months after EA's acquisition of Virgin Interactive, *Thrill Kill* has been officially canceled. Although the game is currently 100 percent complete and ready for store shelves, EA have publicly stated that *Thrill Kill* cannot be released under the EA brand due to its violent content.

Ironically, this follows *Thrill Kill*'s first setback: The ESRB review. Although the board slapped the game with an "AO" (Adults Only) rating as expected, Paradox were forced to cut out two of *TK*'s finishers, as well as certain flesh-shearing sound effects, which were deemed too realistic. All of it: pointless, random arbitration.

I can say this with absolute confidence because we have a beta copy of *Thrill Kill* here at GR. It's almost complete, and it's been played to death and back again. I could review it, but as a rule we never score pre-final games, even canned ones. I know for a fact that *Thrill Kill* is not as violent as others (i.e., EA) would depict it. The violence is obviously severe but shockingly comedic, if that makes any sense. It's horror movie brutality, which can easily be distinguished from reality.

The fact is, people I've played *TK* with all react the same way to the images: A half grunt, half gasp as especially bone-cracking blows are delivered. This, and smiles all around. One sequence of punishment after another, and still everybody laughs. The characters and freaky moves are so clearly exaggerated, it's funny. We've been through this "video game violence" crap in the past, and again the fascism hits a totally unreal fighting game. Give us a break.

In the midst of all this, *Thrill Kill* is a solid multiplayer fighter. The combos are powerful, and the control, while neither *Tekken* nor *VF* smooth, is still better than any U.S.-made 3D fighter in recent memory. Minimum requirements for enjoyment? Find three other fighting game fans, break out the moves list, stick the damage on low (for extra carnage!), and proceed to pound each other for hours. Any hard-core multiplayer gamer would die to have *Thrill Kill* in his or her collection.

It's all up to EA now. Nothing prevents them from selling the property to another company except for an unusually straight-laced moral position. I assure you that many companies would be interested. *Thrill Kill* would still be censored (sadly, as I watch Cleetus' blood-feast finisher), but ready to go into full production nonetheless. You know, I think the ratings board should get to work censoring the cancellation itself. It's the worst slaughter of a video game I've seen in years. ☞

"The Thrill Kill team is definitely disappointed that the game will not be coming out. We are not allowed to comment on the situation of the game any further. However, we have already started working on our next two projects here at Paradox, and are putting the disappointment behind us. When more information is available for the public about either of these projects, you can be sure that the readers of Gamers' Republic will be the first to know. Paradox will always strive to bring forth new ideas and top-notch titles to the industry. That is and always will be our goal."

—Kevin Mulhall, Lead Producer — Paradox



Bloody, fierce, merciless multiplayer mayhem. Belladonna clocks The Imp, Cleetus and the Doc gang beat Tormentor, and Mammoth crushes! Would this sort of violence damage our society?



To the left: *Thrill Kill*'s all-powerful bosses. Cain sends Tormentor for a flesh-burning ride with his fire-ring stomp! Marukka strips Judas' skin with her massive talons. These are the awesome boss characters that nobody will ever get to play. Such an injustice!



EA have strange logic. It appears that brandishing chains across the bloodied faces of hairy bikers in *Road Rash* is acceptable violence, whereas deranged lunatics engaged in mindless depravity in the safety of their own sanitarium is a little too close to the half-gnawed bone (see bottom left - Cleetus dines out!). Bugger. Isn't it clear that gamers know what's right and wrong?



Soul Food...



THE OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE TO
LEGACY OF KAIN

SOUL REAVER



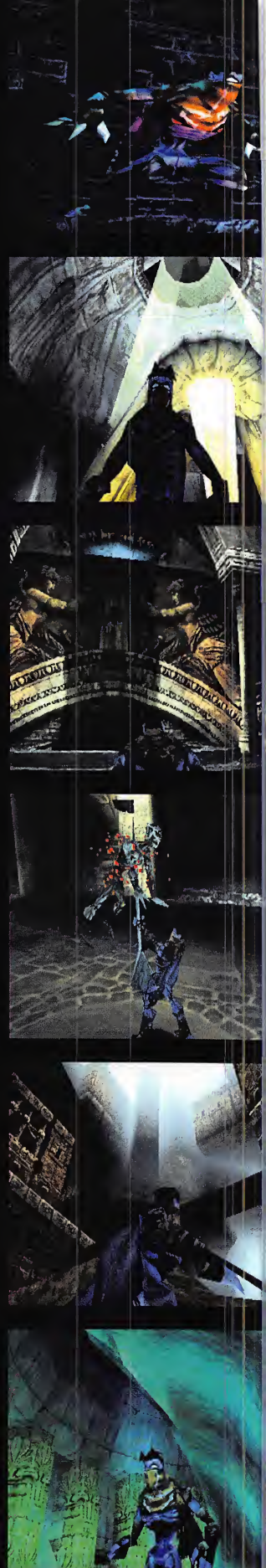
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MILLENNIUM
PUBLICATIONS INC



Say farewell to a system that never got the respect and support it deserved. Making a final curtain call for Saturn is *Rayearth*, a beautiful hand-drawn action/rpg that finds its roots back near the beginning of the Japanese launch. Trace back even farther in time—nearly two

decades farther—and a classic called *Asteroids* is where the PS finds the seeds to grow a version for the '90s; our shooter contingent was more keen on playing *Colony Wars Vengeance* than the newly refurbished classic. Also recommended, the first GBC games show great promise.



GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

APOCALYPSE	C	C-	C-
ASTEROIDS	C-	C-	C-
BATTLE TANK	C	C-	D+
COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE	B+	B	B
F1	B-	C+	C
MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH	A-	B-	B-
NIGHTMARE CREATURES 64	B-	B-	B-
RALLY CROSS 2	B+	B	B
ROLL AWAY	B+	B	B
SCARS	B	B	B-
SHOGO	B	B-	C
SMURFS	B-	C+	C
TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD 2	C	C-	D-
TINY TANK	C+	C	C
TWISTED EDGE	C+	C-	C-
TWISTED METAL 3	B	B	B-
WARIO	B+	B	B
WIPEOUT 64	B-	C+	C

sports

FIFA '99	B+
NBA JAM '99	B
NCAA GAMEBREAKER '98	A-
SKIING '99	D+
QUARTERBACK CLUB '99	B-

1. Games marked in **RED** are highly recommended for your gaming collection.
2. Games marked in **BLUE** should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your gaming evening. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]

(A+) (A) (A-) (B+) (B) (B-) (C+) (C) (C-) (D+) (D) (D-) (F)

[A+ to A] Games in this bracket are the indubitable cream of the crop. They feature the very best in visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. *Example: Zelda: Ocarina of Time*

[A- to B] Games in this bracket are excellent, solid and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight graphical glitching coupled with a marginally disappointing ending may mar an otherwise exalted release. *Example: Xenogears*

[B- to C] Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems and a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. *Example: Shogo*

[C- to D] Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. *Example: Battletanx*

[D- to F] Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Batman & Robin*





FORMULA 1 '98

BY MIKE HOBBS



Scottish developers Visual Sciences step in for Bizarre Creations to bring us the third installment of *Formula 1* for Psygnosis. As its name suggests, *Formula 1 '98* re-creates all the drivers, teams, and courses of the '98 season (which, by the time you read this, will have concluded with Mika Hakkinen becoming the first Finnish World Champion since 1982).

Built around an entirely new 3D engine, it's painfully clear that this sport remains too visually taxing to replicate on current 32-bit hardware. While there are quantitative improvements over Bizarre's attempts in the areas of car modeling and draw distance, this doesn't stop the whole affair from looking incredibly rough around the edges as massive chunks of scenery pop in and out of existence and an overall glitchiness abounds.

It's too bad, really, because as a simulation of Formula 1, it's hard to fault this title. Everything you could want in an F1 title is here: animated pit stops, running commentary by Murray Walker and Martin Brundle, arcade and

grand prix simulation modes, and up to four players simultaneously with link cable. Most importantly, Visual Sciences have managed to instill good and proper control to both arcade and simulation modes. Cars have a realistic and tangible feel, and behave, if not absolutely realistically, then at least as one would expect a Formula 1 car to. The AI, too, is commendable, with each computer driver acting upon a set of parameters culled from real-life driver tendencies.

As with the previous entries in the series, *Formula 1 '98* is best left to fans of the sport (of which there are probably very few in the States). For them, the strict, no-drifting style of gameplay and real-world courses and drivers are a treat. Visual Sciences have taken on a difficult task in picking up where Bizarre left off, but there's only so much that can be done with current 32-bit hardware in re-creating this most graphically demanding sport. ➤



- REALISTIC PHYSICS
- DISCONCERTING AMOUNT OF POP-UP

- FIA LICENSE IS THERE
- CAPTURES FLAVOR OF THE SPORT

REPUBLIC SAYS...

FANS OF THE SPORT WILL APPRECIATE THE SERIES' CONTINUING VERISIMILITUDE, BUT CASUAL GAMERS WILL BE PUT OFF BY THE SEVERE POP-UP AND GLITCHING.

B-



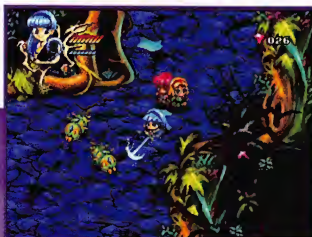
One of the most anticipated Saturn releases of '96 arrives just in time for the Saturn's swan song!



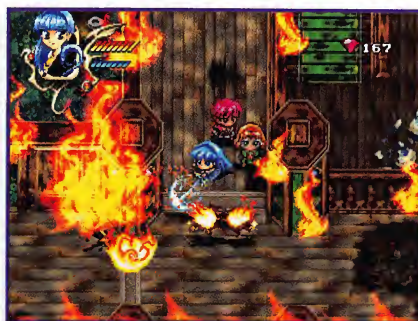
originally released all the way back in 1995, *Magic Knight Rayearth*

has been a long time in coming. Countless Saturn users have kept the candle burning waiting for this epic action/RPG to surface (myself included), and now the time is finally upon us. Working Designs have had to overcome their share of obstacles (such as a two-year battle to preserve the original names and a hard-drive crash at Sega of Japan that resulted in lost files) in bringing us this little slice of heaven, but here it is. And although the fat lady is already home eating a pepperoni pizza, not only have they spared no expense in terms of translation, but they've gone as far as giving *Rayearth* the full WD packaging treatment as well. It says a lot about their commitment to quality.

by Dave Halverson



As the trio progresses, all three record their adventures in a diary that you can access any time. There's even an option to have the character of your choice read any selected entry out loud!



Look at them... pathetic, isn't it? They're so entranced by my dancing, they can't even move!



Well, the armor is evolutionary. It seems to have changed as our power and skill grew...



Now you will learn that unfortunate truth firsthand! Run! Run! Run, COWARDS!



Will hand-drawn action-role-playing games ever return? Or is Magic Knight Rayearth the last of the breed?

After four years, you're probably wondering if this old-school, hand-drawn, top-view game can hold its own in the polygonal world. Well, yes, I believe it can. In fact, because it's been so long since a game like this has surfaced, *Rayearth* actually comes across as fresh and new, rather than old and outdated. Although the anime-style caricatures of Fuu, Umi, and Hikaru are abundantly cute, the game is masterfully drawn and colored, and exudes a seldom (if ever) seen level of detail.

Based on the classic anime by Clamp, the story begins as the teenage trio (having just met) is abruptly thrust from earth and deposited into Cefiro, a beautiful land that has been plunged into chaos. Greeted by Clef, the girls are told of the legend of the Magic Knights—that they are indeed the chosen ones—and of how they must unleash the Ancient Machines to fulfill the prophecy. After their first brush with disaster, the girls meet up with Precia who, in time, pre-

pares their sacred weapons from the mineral Escudo. Once the weapons are crafted, they must be fortified through the power of the girls' minds. The three decide the best way of doing this is by helping those in need, and so the adventure begins: Zagat sends his faithful, one by one, to do-in the Magic Knights as they travel the countryside building friendships (and thwarting enemies), making their way closer and closer to unraveling his diabolical scheme.

Playing *MKR* is a simple yet constantly evolving process. With a flick of the right shoulder button, you can select any of the three girls any time; hence, this is where much of the game's play mechanics lie. Besides jumping and dashing abilities, each Magic Knight has specific attributes: Fuu is an archer capable of healing and organic magic, Hikaru wields a sword and can summon fiery spells, and Umi holds a sword along with devastating water spells. Using the right girl at the right time is key to your survival. As you progress in the game, new spells and moves constantly emerge, the music is indescribably majestic and the puzzles set before you are a joy to unravel.

MKR is a solid mix of action and role playing. The action unfurls among vast burghs and complex labyrinths of impeccable detail. Effects

Rayearth was one of the first-ever top-view games to incorporate rendered graphics.



such as wind, fog, layers of parallax, and an amazing fade effect as you ascend staircases add a magical feel to the entire adventure. Coupled with the vibrant coloring, smooth animation, and legendary art styling of Clamp, *MKR* stands as one of the finest games of its kind. One of many aspects of the design I especially appreciate is the fact that the inhabitants and enemies throughout are as highly detailed as the Magic Knights themselves. This game is simply beautiful to look at from beginning to end.

And now on to the all-important translation. Hardcore anime fans being nearly impossible to please, WD aimed high in the voice-acting department, and as a result deliver an excellent dub, along with a very well translated script. Compared to standard VHS anime dubbing, *Rayearth's* voice acting ranks among the best. I especially like what they've done with Clef, the Magic Knights' guide and closest friend throughout the adventure. Also notable is the fact that the speaking parts have been diminished somewhat. The original game had a tendency to drag on a bit as the characters rambled during less-than-significant events without the option of skipping ahead. WD have preserved all of the most pivotal scenes with live voice, but lessened the frustration factor by cutting unneeded dialogue and just going with straight text. There are also, of course, abundant original anime cut scenes on hand, which provide a glimpse of Clamp's legendary style while tying together events beautifully.

In the end, *Rayearth* accomplishes three things. At once it marks the Saturn's last significant release, stands at the top of its genre providing many hours of engulging if not eloquent gameplay, and provides a final glimpse of the way games used to be. I'm just glad it made the journey. ⚡



Clamp's fantastic character designs are displayed in cinematics that link events throughout the game. The series, which was to air over a year ago, has yet to make its U.S. debut.

■ STUNNING HAND-DRAWN VISUALS
■ GREAT STORY BASED ON CLASSIC ANIME

■ A TRULY LEGENDARY SOUNDTRACK
■ RENDERERS LOOK A LITTLE DATED

REPUBLIC SAYS...

AN OVERALL UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE FOR ANIME AND ACTION-ROLE-PLAYING FANS EVERYWHERE. WORKING DESIGNS ARE TO BE COMMENDED.

A.

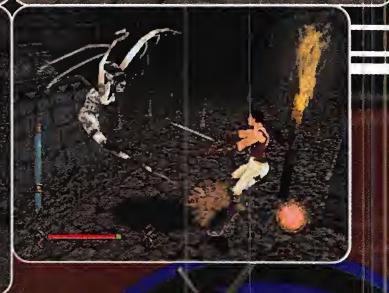


Dark, bloody, fiercely action oriented, *Nightmare Creatures* is an entertaining journey through and below the dank streets and alleyways of 19th-century London. The strongest element of the game, the heavy atmosphere evokes an inescapable feeling of being placed in authentic corners of an antiquated city. Credit this great visual sense to the detailed texture art and sophisticated level design, which were patterned after actual London maps.

Prowling the thick night air, the creatures in the game leap from cemetery stones and boarded-up alleys and sewer passages with daunting force. These enormous, beautifully modeled monsters attack with such quickness and stamina, taking them out can be a maddening task. When faced with one of these evil beings manifested out of the fears of the people of the city, hand-to-hand combat is the primary line of offense for Nadia, the female swordsman, or Ignatius, a staff-wielding monk. Using a variety of combos and special attacks unique to each character, players can gruesomely decapitate and dismember their victim one part at a time: individual appendages exhibit collision, allowing the creature to continue on while a body part is severed. Relentless in their pursuit and highly resilient in defense, the formidable monsters demand that the player concentrate on combos and blocking and the careful use of spells and weapons for survival.

Indeed, *Nightmare Creatures 64* is a staunch challenge, but part of this struggle is inextricably linked to the awkward controls and camera. Attempting to squarely face a deftly circling creature takes deliberate hops back and to the sides rather than quick turns, leading to bouts of frustration. Occasionally, platforming elements make their way into the game, requiring that you once again fight the precarious controls and artificial camera tracking to successfully cross murky waters.

Nightmare Creatures 64 sets out to engulf us in a brooding atmosphere and potent confrontations with awesome monsters, and to do so as effectively as the original PlayStation version. It succeeds on all accounts, but the real potential of the game's appealing theme is waiting to be achieved in the forthcoming *Nightmare Creatures 2*. ❀



It's a rarity to battle such wicked creatures on Nintendo 64. And, yes, they're as formidable as they look.



Compelling Gothic ambience in scenes like this are the game's driving force.



NIGHTMARE CREATURES 64

BY BRADY FIECHTER



*Even Jack the Ripper would be envious
of the malevolence penetrating these dusky London streets*

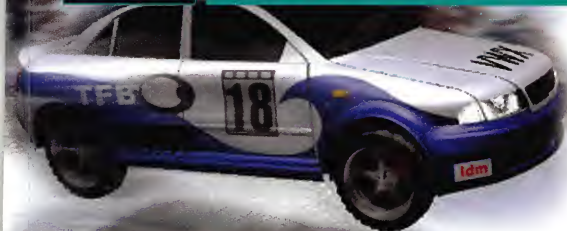
■ ABSORBING ATMOSPHERE - CITY VERY WELL DESIGNED
■ HUGE, IMPRESSIVE CREATURES

■ PREPARE TO DEAL WITH FRUSTRATING CONTROL/CAMERA
■ PUNCH, KICK, SLASH... PUNCH, KICK, SLASH...

REPUBLIC SAYS...

COMING OFF THE PLAYSTATION FULLY INTACT, NIGHTMARE CREATURES BRINGS AN ENTERTAINING AND MUCH-NEEDED GAME OF GRUESOME COMBAT AND ADVENTURE TO N64.





RALLY CROSS 2

BY MIKE HOBBS



Like any good sequel, *Rally Cross 2* builds on the foundation laid down in the first game and introduces a suite of enhancements. While offering up more vehicles and courses, an all new track editor has also been thrown into the mix. The bouncy, low-gravity feel of the original title returns, as does the slight annoyance that accompanies this particular physics engine. It's like you're driving on the moon, and something as small as nipping the inside of a corner as you dip into it can send your car onto its roof. As you learn the courses, however, the bouncy physics can become entertaining, though they're far from realistic.

Rally Cross 2's high point, in my opinion, is track design that is both visually interesting and more than a little challenging. You'll race through diverse landscapes depicting castles, rocky southwestern terrain, and twisty, snow-covered roads. One noteworthy course has you racing through a lovely autumnal brush that transitions into a cordoned-off airport complete with a



quick dash through a hangar. And, in a nice touch, your car can pick up dust and dirt as it races through some of the more ragged parts of the scenery.

The bonus-track editor is worthy for its inclusion, but it does not allow you to create courses with the same level of complexity as the stock ones. Specifically, there's no way to create gross up and down contouring, and all turns are 90 degree corners, which tends to make your tracks a little dull. But I suppose that's a bit like looking a gift horse in the mouth.

With *Rally Cross 2*, 989 Studios continue to build on their reputation of delivering strong titles that fall just shy of greatness. Occasionally glitchy graphics, a clunky interface, bland tunes and, again, intermittently annoying gameplay keep this one from greatness. Excellent course design and a strong two-player mode (up to four with link) make it worth playing. —M



■ GREAT AND DIVERSE COURSE DESIGN
■ STRONG TWO-PLAYER SPLIT SCREEN

■ BONUS TRACK EDITOR
■ BOUNCY PHYSICS A MATTER OF TASTE

REPUBLIC SAYS...

RALLY CROSS 2 IS A FINE SEQUEL THAT ULTIMATELY PROVES FUN DESPITE ITS ANNOYING FLOATINESS AND GENERAL LACK OF POLISH.



Big guns? Gigantic stomping mechs? Bloody entrails?
Shogo - a stylish, intense and bloody romp in a neo-future!



Shogo: Mobile Armor Division is a first in the evolving first-person shooting game that matches senseless bloodletting with a new and original take on the action; in this case, giant anime-style mechs stomping through valley and neo-city arenas. The intertwined storyline segues the almost alternate action of giant robots crushing tanks and other mechs with numerous futuristic weaponry, with a more familiar "on-foot" Quake 2-style infiltration of various

enemy facilities. This is a breath of fresh air in a stagnant genre, and provides the PC (and soon the Dreamcast) gamer with a dollop of style and content as well as the prerequisites for a game of this nature.



SHOGO

BY DAVID HODGSON



What prerequisites? Well, violence and a truck-load of weapons, for starters. Blood, gore, and flying body parts explode with an over-exuberance on par with *House of the Dead*. When you're on foot, great gouts of crimson matter shoot from recently wounded soldiers, and the subtle art of "gibbing" (i.e., fragmenting an enemy target into smaller, bloodier chunks of writhing flesh from extremely

close distances) has been handled in a very professional fashion. Body portions remain discernable even when scattered over a wide arc. To create these effects, though, you'll need weapons just as impressive, and after the usual display of machine guns and pistols, you'll applaud the "rubber ball" effects of the Kato weapon... obviously named after Chief Inspector Clouseau's butler.



Mech warfare, although more enclosed, has even more lavish smoke effects as the Lithtech engine kicks into overdrive. Massive explosions and the clanking of deactivating mechs as you strafe past fortress walls and through neon cities has never been more realistically conveyed in a video game. Again, the weapons are first-rate (aside from the dully colored lasers), and have you skirting city blocks, launching quad rockets and diving back behind cover. At times confusing, but often quite entertaining, the storyline (including the infiltration of a market, and even a quest for a lost cat) weaves the game through to an anticlimactic end.



modE type:ordog



However, there are problems. First, the mech sniper rifle is far too easy to snipe with, and enemy intelligence means you'll be fully visible and still able to plug away with bullets while the "intelligent" mech stands there and takes slugs to the helm. Second, the levels aren't big enough, with "sprawling" cities taking up only three or four blocks at a time. There's no real variety of enemies, with only two (!) real foes to face in the nonmech combat. Crank up the difficulty setting, and those soldiers become horribly cheap, increasing their hit probability rather

than their intelligence. And this brings me to the AI, which is usually poor: you'll regularly find horribly deformed "human" polygon models (another problem) running into walls, while actual enemies exhibit none of the intelligence of enemies in *Half-Life* or *Unreal*. "Stupid but accurate" is the best way to describe them, and this mars what could have been a real contender for the first-person-shooting crown. Still, this is entertaining and a recommended purchase. ☹



■ DEATHMATCH - MECH OR ON FOOT - IS EXCELLENT.
■ AN EXCITING ADVENTURE SCULPTED WITH STYLE.

■ "BUDDY" TALK IS GRATING, AND THE GAME TOO SHORT.
■ COMBAT IS TOO SIMPLE, WITH LOGOTOMIZED ENEMIES.

REPUBLIC SAYS...

A GROUP OF TECHNICAL WIZARDS HAVE CRAFTED A FINE FIRST RELEASE, WITH HUMOR, STYLE AND EXCITEMENT, MARRED ONLY BY A LACK OF ENEMIES AND A QUICK COMPLETION.

B



lower power

HANDLING TIGHT
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



roadkill

HANDLING TIGHT
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



thumper

HANDLING AVERAGE
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



jamie buzz

HANDLING AVERAGE
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



spectre

HANDLING AVERAGE
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



minion

HANDLING AVERAGE
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



worthog

HANDLING SLOUGHISH
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



fire starter

HANDLING TIGHT
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



clubkid

HANDLING TIGHT
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



alex

HANDLING SLOUGHISH
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED



auger

HANDLING SLOUGHISH
ARMOR
SPECIAL WEAPON
SPEED

TWISTED METAL II

TWISTED METAL 3

BY MIKE GRIFFIN

Twisted Metal 3 is worth buying. Yep, that's the first thought that comes to mind. To be honest, I was a little worried about the state of this game. Our original preview disc had a really chuggy frame rate, and I had trouble adapting to the "Tru Physics" control and response. The next preview disc was twice as fast, fully optimized, and very playable. And with this final version, it's clear that 989 Studios have been burning the midnight oil to ensure *TM3*'s success. Although considerably removed from the previous *Twisted Metal* games and the *Singletrac* style, *TM3* does the series justice. 989 have provided furious weaponry, huge environments, and hyper-aggressive foes, just like fans expect and deserve.

Twisted Metal 3, like most any vehicular combat game, does have its faults – namely, imperfect collision and frustrating physics. Just like *V8*, the collision around objects is great. Unfortunately, it's extremely rough at times around the edges of environmental shapes like walls, ridges, and various inclines – a problem *V8* shares. Combined with the active physics model, however, the dodgy collision often leads to an annoyingly bouncy flip-over of your vehicle. And once you're flipped over on your roof, your vehicle suddenly shrinks and reappears right-side up. It only takes a second, but when you start again (from a dead stop), you're bound to receive a few unavoidable projectiles. It happens quite a bit, so it ends up affecting the flow of gameplay. Because the handling is extremely responsive, sometimes it feels like your car/truck/bike is glued to the road, but then you'll catch a strange bounce and a bizarre physics display ensues. Oh well.

As mentioned, *TM3*'s controls are tight. With the right balance of turbo boosts and smart handbraking, you can

pull off just about any maneuver you attempt. Some might say it's too sensitive, requiring too much correction, but once you learn how to compensate effectively, the steering response is excellent.

TM3 has almost everything else going for it. The engine runs at a constant 30 fps and the colored lighting is impressive, while large playfields refuse to break up. Rob Zombie and Pitchshifter provide an intense and suitable soundtrack (but how many more games can Pitchshifter be in?). The tracks are more contained than *TM2*, reduced to big deathmatch-type arenas, but there's usually plenty of stuff to interact with, jump over, and blow up (such as patrolling saucers in the Area 51 stage). Also, the combo attacks are a little weak, and there could be more weapon variety. I do love that Rain Missile, though.

There you have it. This is the new style of *Twisted Metal*. Fans of the series might be in shock for a moment, but fans of the genre as a whole should generally approve of the game right away.



- POWERFUL, WELL-LIT 30 FPS ENGINE LOOKS GOOD
- 6000 LEVELS, PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR STRATEGY

- GOTTA LOVE THAT LINK-UP MODE: UP TO 4 PLAYERS!
- ROB ZOMBIE'S TUNES FIT INTO THE CHAOS PERFECTLY

REPUBLIC SAYS...

IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENT FOR FIRST-TIME TWISTED METAL DEVELOPERS, *TM3* IS HIGH-QUALITY VEHICULAR COMBAT WITH GREAT REPLAY VALUE. ALMOST AS GOOD AS *VIGILANTE 8*.

B

The Undead Beware...



...they'll stay down for the Count!

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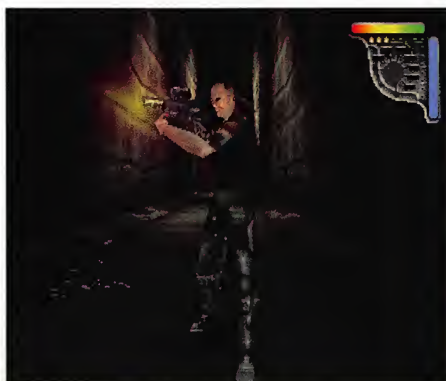
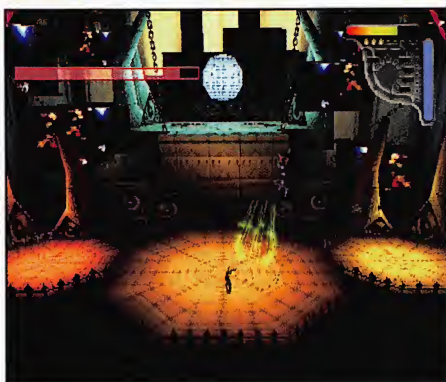
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MILLENNIUM
PUBLICATIONS INC



APOCALYPSE

DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION AVAILABLE: NOW



In some ways I admire the repair work Neversoft has done here, especially considering the shoddy materials Activision supplied to them: fragmented, broken gameplay concepts and tons of pointlessly expensive motion capture and CG. After the developmental failure and consequent cancellation of Activision's first in-house *Apocalypse* effort, they decided to go for a pure shooter instead of virtual-buddy-Bruce-Willis action. As a result, we're playing a rushed, glitchy conglomeration of Neversoft's modified MDK engine and Activision's mediocre CG and poorly directed motion capture, merged to form a chugging *ONE* wannabe with intolerably cheesy themes and voiceovers. After playing through *Apocalypse* a couple of times, though, I have to admit it has its moments. The final few levels are good and tough, and the last boss is intense... at 15 frames per second. Also, the *Smash* TV-type control system is very nice, and Bruce responds instantly to commands (whenever the screen refresh rate is behaving). Ultimately, it's very difficult to accept the whole *Apocalypse* experience because it's so framey, so glitchy, and such a blatantly inferior *ONE* rip-off in so many different areas.



BATTLE TANX

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: 3DO AVAILABLE: NOW



Tank warfare is serious business. Let's see: What instantly pops into mind as one conjures up the possibilities? Heavy metal tanks with turrets spinning, puffing forth concrete-shattering projectiles at a fever pitch, carefully maneuvering your vehicle, strafing from view just enough to fry the enemy... before he fries you! Well, you can forget all that, folks, because in *BattleTanx* the tank you get to control (initially) looks more like a Subaru, the turret is welded into place, buildings melt rather than explode, and avoiding hits is at times impossible. Before I cease grumbling, I also would have liked one or two additional camera angles (zoomed farther away), as the two provided (one just above the turret and one directly behind the tank) lend a cramped feel to the proceedings. Things aren't all bad, though: I do like the story elements (sort of a *Mad Max*-in-a-tank theme) and the multiplayer game is good fun, although I buy games primarily for the one-player action. Also, between each mission, comic-book-style cinemas play out the hero's (aptly named Griffin) story nicely, making an admirable attempt to submerge the player and tie the scenarios together.

If only the art and storyline were realized better once the action commenced, we may have had a great game here. I would like to have seen some of the more creative characters outside of the vehicles, be it lofting molotov cocktails or simply to turn into road kill. True, the N64 really needs a good tank warfare game, but *BattleTanx* falls short in terms of play mechanics, music (high porn), and repetition. When you stack it up against the likes of *Assault Rigs* or even *Steel Reign*, *BattleTanx* misses the mark. If you're a hard-core multiplayer fan, though, you may want to split the bill four ways with some pals and blast away. ⚡



TWISTED EDGE SNOWBOARDING

DEVELOPER: BOSS/KEMCO PUBLISHER: MIDWAY AVAILABLE: NOW

It's funny: the N64 endured a lengthy drought as far as snowboarding games were concerned, then 1080 suddenly came along and pretty much conquered the genre. 1080 deserves every accolade it has received; its controls are excellent, the tracks are cool, and it has an appealing style. And let's not forget the Miyamoto touch.

Now there's finally competition for 1080... Or is there? Well, *Twisted Edge Snowboarding* is available right now, but it's not about to rock the genre on the N64. This Boss Studios/Kemco effort is loaded with a bunch of really nice looking tracks, but it unfortunately fails to deliver solid, intuitive gameplay. This is such an important element in a snowboarding game, but *Twisted Edge* has recklessly

traded in solid, consistent play mechanics for mundane play modes. In the game, you ascend the ranks racing three other CPU competitors through boring tracks. Alternately, you may attempt to complete the trick modes, which are based on points and time. Standard stuff. Trouble is, the control system is very imprecise and trackside collision is ridiculously haphazard. So, even when you set forth with the best of intentions, you're typically rewarded with frustrating play: Touch a competitor in the slightest and you're on your ass before you can say b****s***. That's just one annoyance. Stray off the track a little (on the other side of barriers) and it's basically over. You're stuck, the camera freaks out, and before you know it you're pausing to restart the track.

O.K., so ideally you're in the middle of the course, carving between the competition, pulling off as many tricks as possible. It's just not that fun in *Twisted Edge*. Video game snowboarding should be exaggerated, of course, but it's supposed to convey a sense of realism. That's what gives you the rush, the feeling of peril. In *TES* the characters look twitchy, switching between animations in an unrealistic way, and the grabs and spins end up looking wrong.

As you can tell, I'm not too happy with *Twisted Edge Snowboarding*. I won't even talk about the music and voices (thank God there's a kill switch). There are too many faults here to ignore. I could see a thoroughly play-tested sequel being much, much improved, because the 3D engine is already very impressive. ☹

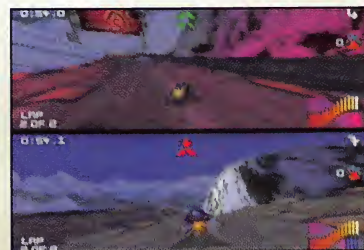


WIPEOUT 64

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE: NOW

When I heard that one of my all time favorite PlayStation and Saturn racers was headed to the 64, I was quite enthused. Unfortunately, however, the best-laid plans have again gone awry for the once mighty Psygnosis. Have they not seen *F-Zero*? While the end product for the N64 is indeed a

fairly entertaining version, exclusive to the system, it doesn't really offer anything beyond the original. In fact, it offers less in the 1-player game. One of the coolest aspects of the original was the alluring character art that went along with the different teams. Not only is there now no in-game art, but in the all-important Challenge mode, you cannot select your team or car; rather, they are assigned. This is acceptable through the first five tracks, but in Challenge 6, when you're given a log of a car with muddy steering for the tightest track of the lot, frustration ensues. Either they're trying to make the game last longer or this is a serious design flaw. Also, while there is no fog in the game, the pop-up is highly evident and dead ahead at all times. Adding insult to injury, the 4-player mode, with its absentee backgrounds, is akin to racing on a linguini noodle, and the two-player game isn't much better. On the plus side, the music is excellent for a cart muncher, and the feel of the series has been successfully conveyed in the 1-player game. In the end, *Wipeout 64* falls short of my high expectations. ⚡



ASTEROIDS

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION AVAILABLE: NOW

The retro gravy train continues with this update of the 1979 classic *Asteroids*. Yes, you too can experience nineteen-year-old gameplay on your PlayStation. While some new elements have been added such as power ups, a selection of ships to choose from, and shiny CG scenes, this is basically the same old *Asteroids*. Unlike *Tempest 2000*, probably the best update of a classic title, the graphics here aren't as hyped-up as they could be (though they are kind of cool), and the soundtrack just lays there, burbling away nondescriptly in the background. The two-player mode could have saved it, but it's a boring points race with no end. If you really dug *Asteroids*, though, you might want to rent this. There's just little reason for anyone outside of the *Asteroids* fanatic to warrant a serious look. >R<



COLONY WARS VENGEANCE

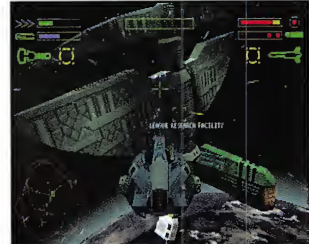
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE: NOW

Great atmosphere, heavy action, and superb graphics – graft these into the design plan of your futuristic space shooter, and gamers flock to it. Call it *Colony Wars*, sell vaults full of copies. Make a sequel, make even more money. If *Colony Wars Vengeance* fails to net the same huge success of the original, there can be only one reason for the falling interest in such a good game: the sequel just isn't that much better. But when you've got a good thing, keep it that way.

Certain things have definitely changed since we embarked on a mission of destruction through the beautiful depths of space in the original *Colony Wars*. One hundred years have passed, and we are now fighting for the Navy, the side we were sworn to defeat the first time around. But no matter who we are fighting for, the prime objective remains unchanged: if the enemy is near, target and destroy. There is always the heavily armed fighter to deal with, but at times the resistance is in the form of such dangers as floating mines, satellites, or radiated cargo, all of which must be diverted from surrounding allies.

Awash in mammoth polygonal mother ships, detailed and convincing space environments, and extravagant effects, *Colony Wars Vengeance* brings the plight of a futuristic war to our screen with absorbing strength. To reach the final resolution point of the intense combat, we pass through multiple

mission points in branching, nonlinear paths, the direction dependent on a previous mission's success or failure. Dissolving the monotony that can sometimes seep into the experience from the overly homogenous backdrop of space battle and occasionally tedious objectives, land-based missions offer a good change of scenery – but certainly not pace. *Colony Wars Vengeance* is unrelenting in its intense space combat. ✨



ROLL AWAY

DEVELOPER: GD SWEDEN PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS AVAILABLE: NOW

Navigating the three-dimensional planes in *Roll Away* is one of the most stimulating mind exercises you're likely to engage in while playing a video game. In its setup, *Roll Away* is hugely original.

Navigating elaborate networks of rotating blocks and rectangles fixed in a 3D space, you take control of a beach ball that is confined to forward motion along any side of the current path. A sharp sense of visual acuity is imperative to keep a proper lock on the perspective of surrounding blocks of track, which are often separated and manipulated in such a way that requires drops and jumps from one point to the next. The confusion you will first experience is intense, but once you begin to break the boundaries of thinking two dimensionally, the satisfaction of finding the scattered keys and locating the exit becomes a driving addiction. ✨



SCARS

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: UBISOFT AVAILABLE: NOW

I thoroughly enjoyed *SCARS* on the PlayStation, so when revving up the 64-bit version, I had high hopes for an even better ride. Sadly, however, *SCARS* on the 64 isn't quite as good. The game still ranks among the best for the system, though, as there's still plenty of room for another good combat/racer on the N64. One of *SCARS*' best assets is an excellent multiplayer mode. Even during 4-player combat, the action is surprisingly fluid. Unlike *Wipeout 64*, the tracks stay pretty much intact as do the controls. With great track design, increasingly longer laps, hidden cars, good tunes, and added depth via an assortment of cups, *SCARS*

outshined its competition easily on PC and PS, but in the N64's case, the obvious comparisons are *Mario Kart 64* and *DKR* – tough acts to follow. *SCARS* holds its own, though, and overall has shaped up to be a classy vehicular racer across three platforms. I think a sequel is in order... if they'll only slow down that frickin' Rhino car. ✨



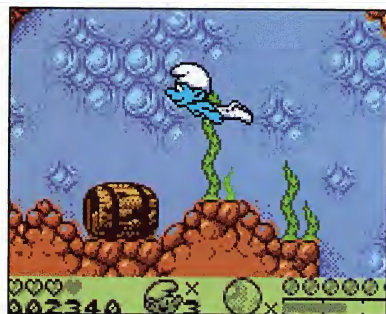
SMURFS NIGHTMARE

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: INFOGRAVES AVAILABLE: NOW

Smurfs Nightmare is the first game I've played made specifically to take advantage of the new bigger-badder-better GameBoy Color, and I must say, I am pleasantly surprised. What's this I see? Line scrolling floors and deep parallax scrolling? *Smurfs* looks more like a decent Genesis game than a GameBoy title. While I have no interest whatsoever in Smurfmania, I played on, if only to see if the game had legs, and again, surprise! *Smurfs* is designed much like those SNES and Genesis games of not so long ago.



B-



Inside each of the *Smurfs'* residences, straightforward platforming takes center stage, while outside, as you meet other inhabitants of the village, racing and other task-based games take place amongst stunning backgrounds that look like the best of the 16-bit era. Although aimed directly at children, *Smurfs* is a solid game for anyone who can look past the kiddie theme. ⚡

TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD 2

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: ACCOLADE AVAILABLE: NOW

Accolade's standards are certainly being raised, but there's still room for improvement. With *TDOR 2*, they have annihilated the original game. Considering how substandard the first *TDOR* was, almost any change would've been for the better. To their credit, however, Accolade's in-house development team completely overhauled the game.

First, by using Pitbull Syndicate's *Test Drive 4* engine, they've been able to construct sprawling off-road courses. The desert, jungle, beach, and street vistas are streamed off the disc for loads of nonrepeating scenery. At times this becomes a hindrance (at least to your interest) as the tracks drag on for what feels like an eternity: Entire sections might consist of drawn-out, slow-motion uphill tedium, or pointlessly difficult cavernous areas. Also, Accolade are stressing that players memorize the track layouts due to super-specific terrain types. This is apparently part of the challenge, but, ultimately, the landscapes become frustrating as the concept of racing competitors disappears and a fixation with the ground beneath you ensues.

Most important, the collision is a tad haphazard, especially around cluttered areas of the track (such as the ruins in the desert), and the control is constantly in flux as terrain types change. Combined with a noticeable chug as multiple vehicles fill the screen, the general feel of the game is undeniably stuttered, but it can be fun when played in the hood cam and when you're all alone on the track - which improves the off-road sensation and ensures a

high frame rate. So if you're always able to play *TDOR 2* just this way, you're set! Umm... maybe not. The package is rounded out by wailing, low-quality guitar licks, poorly textured Hummers, F-150s, Rams, and Jeeps, and clunky selection screens. As I said before, this sequel is miles better than the original, but the series has a long way to go before entering the upper echelon of driving games. ⚡



C



TINY TANK: Up Your Arsenal

DEVELOPER: APPALOOSA PUBLISHER: MGM AVAILABLE: NOW

As technology continues to advance, video games are only going to become increasingly more like film. *Tiny Tank: Up Your Arsenal* is a fine example of film conventions seeping into the craft of video game making; the game adheres to the strict guidelines of trite action film production. Rule No. 1: When the hero is out to save the world, inane, sarcastic one-liners must be present at all times, to the point that they become an insult. Rule No. 2: Fill the screen with so much explosive force that there is little time to devote attention to anything else. Rule No. 3: When setting is in the future, place a handful of really cool mechanical adversaries in the way. Rule No. 4: Assure that no moment passes when protagonist is not heavily armed. Rule No. 5: Make the backdrops flashy enough and the scenes effects-laden enough to ensure that there are adequate diversions from the liberal use of banal tasks. Rule No. 6: (a) In movie, if audience's thought process is slowed to absolute zero, hope sales on opening weekend are enough to carry project, or (b) in game, if the screen itself becomes so slowed down that playability of game is sliced in half, also hope sales adequately bypass destructive word-of-mouth proclaiming that game too often loses our attention. ✨



C



WARIO LAND 2

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: NINTENDO AVAILABLE: NOW

Much to my dismay, *WarioLand 2* for the GameBoy Color is merely a colorized version of the previously released game. So on the one hand, if you already own it there's not much reason to buy the color version (although it looks markedly better). On the other hand if, you've never played *WL2*, you can begin looking forward to a hard-core 2D platformer that's both incredibly addicting (the game is nearly impossible to put down) and better looking than ever. It's those old-school *Mario* play mechanics that draw you in, along with a host of new Wario-tastic



B



maneuvers and personas like Super Fat, Drunken, and Zombie Wario. While *WL2* isn't as technically advanced as games being made specifically for the new, more powerful GB, what it lacks in the effects department, it more than makes up for in gameplay and character design. A must-own game for GBC fans everywhere. ⚡



COUNTER + POINT



Apocalypse • Neversoft • Activision

As Reviewed By: Mike Griffin (page 84)

THIS IS A RAMSHACKLE OF RUSHED GAME DESIGN. I PERSONALLY THINK THAT NEVERSOFT IS A PRETTY TALENTED DEVELOPER. I BLAME THE STATE OF APOCALYPSE ON ACTIVISION. THEY'VE SPENT SO MUCH MONEY AND TIME ON THE PROJECT, AND IT'S STILL NOT VERY GOOD. IF IT WAS NEVERSOFT'S BABY FOR A FULL TWO-YEAR CYCLE, PERHAPS WE'D BE PLAYING GREATNESS.



- BRUCE WILLIS' INVOLVEMENT BASICALLY WASTED ON WINCE-INDUCING COMMENTS AND LAME ASIDES.
- ACTION IS HAPHAZARD AT BEST, WITH A SUPREME LACK OF REFINEMENT HAMPERING POTENTIALLY EXCITING GAMEPLAY.

Mike Hobbs:

C-

WHEN ACTIVISION SCRAPPED THEIR ORIGINAL CONCEPT FOR APOCALYPSE, NEVERSOFT TOOK THE GAME INTO ONE TERRITORY - FAST, NON-STOP ACTION AND STREAMING BACKGROUNDS. IT'S JUST TOO BAD THEY FORGOT TO INCLUDE THAT GAME'S TIGHT, BUTTONED-UP GAMEPLAY AND COHERENT ACTION. WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT THE BACKGROUND GRAPHICS ARE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE, THE GAME SIMPLY DOES NOT FLOW, IF THAT MAKES ANY SENSE. MINDLESS ACTION INTENTIONS ASIDE, EACH LEVEL SIMPLY FEELS POINTLESS. THERE'S JUST NOTHING SATISFYING ABOUT THE GAMEPLAY, AND THAT'S ALL AN ACTION TITLE CAN REALLY OFFER IN THE END. WHAT'S WORSE, BRUCE'S INVOLVEMENT HAS BASICALLY BEEN REDUCED TO A BUNCH OF REALLY LAME SCREAMING OF REALLY LAME COMMENTS.



- FROM A DISMAL, GRITTY THEME TO RELENTLESS, CHAOTIC ACTION, THIS GAME SCREAMS FOR TIGHT PROGRAMMING.
- DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT REPUTATION, BRUCE. YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN WORSE ENTERTAINMENT THAN THIS.

Grady Fiechter:

C-

APOCALYPSE IS ONE SCENE OF DESTRUCTION AFTER ANOTHER: BULLETS FLY, BODIES BURST, DEBRIS FALLS, GLASS SHATTERS, AND BASICALLY WHATEVER CAN EXPLODE, DOES. HOW I WOULD LOVE THIS GAME AND ALL ITS MINDLESS ACTION IF THE CHAOS AROUND ME WERE DISPLAYED WITH SOME SENSE OF STRUCTURE AND GRAPHICAL COHESION. WITH A BIT OF SOUND PROGRAMMING TO PULL ALL THE SCATTERED PIECES TOGETHER, THE GAME COULD HAVE PROVEN TO JUSTIFY THE IMMENSE RESOURCES ACTIVISION ALLOCATED FOR THE PROJECT, WHICH HAS BEEN CURSED FROM THE START. SORRY, BRUCE, BUT YOUR ROYALTY CHECKS ARE GOING TO BE SLIM WITH THIS ONE.



Asteroids • Atari • Activision

As Reviewed By: Mike Hobbs (page 86)

YES, YOU TOO CAN EXPERIENCE NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD GAMEPLAY ON YOUR PLAYSTATION. WHILE SOME NEW ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN ADDED SUCH AS POWER UPS, A SELECTION OF SHIPS TO CHOOSE FROM, AND SHINY CG CUT SCENES, THIS IS BASICALLY THE SAME OLD ASTEROIDS. WORTH A RENTAL FOR FANS OF THE CLASSIC VERSION.

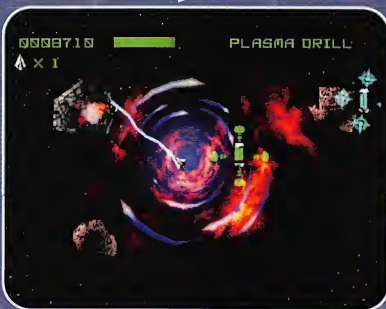


- I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST RE-LIVING THE CLASSICS, YET RARELY DOES A CLASSIC EXTEND NEARLY TWO DECADES INTO THE PAST.
- GOOD LUCK TOLERATING THE LASER SOUND EFFECTS.

Grady Fiechter:

C-

BRINGING BACK A GAME THAT WAS RELEASED 19 YEARS AGO AND OFFERING IT AS MORE OF AN UPDATE THAN A RADICAL REDESIGNING IS A RISKY MOVE. NOSTALGIA CROSSES OVER INTO ANTIQUATED WITH THIS VERSION OF ASTEROIDS FOR THE NEW GENERATION OF GAMER. THE GAME IS OSTENSIBLY FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE CLASSIC ASTEROIDS MECHANICS HOUSED IN FLASHY BACKDROPS OF SPACE, AND FOR GAMERS NOT EVEN BORN WHEN THE GAME WAS FIRST RELEASED, IT CAN SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT TECHNOLOGY AFFORDED FOR THE BIRTH OF GAMING. EVEN THE TITLE OF THE GAME, "ASTEROIDS," HASN'T BEEN ALTERED IN ANY WAY - WHICH IS A GOOD DECISION; TAGGING SOMETHING LIKE "2000" ON THE GAME WOULD HAVE BEEN MISLEADING.



- ASTEROIDS IS ETERNALLY BASIC. I ALWAYS PREFERRED SEGA'S RIPOFF, SPACE FURY, AND ITS IMPROVED GAMEPLAY.
- SINCE THEY'RE ATTEMPTING TO PULL OFF AN UPDATE, THIS GAME SHOULD LOOK AND SOUND SO MUCH BETTER.

Mike Griffin:

C-

I APPRECIATE THE FUNDAMENTAL, BASIC FUN OF ASTEROIDS, AND THAT IS INDEED WHAT THIS UPDATE PROVIDES. IT HAS NEW POWER-UPS, SUCH AS SHIELDS AND MEGA BOMBS, AND THERE'S A COMPETITIVE TWO-PLAYER MODE. RECENT CLASSIC UPDATES HAVE GONE MUCH FURTHER BY TAPPING INTO THE POWER OF NEW HARDWARE. TEMPEST 2000 AND TEMPEST X EPITOMIZE SUCH ENHANCEMENT, OFFERING HIGH-POWERED 3D EFFECTS AND SUPERB MUSIC. EVEN ROBOTRON X FELT LIKE A TRUE UPDATE. ASTEROIDS HAS RUDIMENTARY POLYGONAL BACKGROUND ELEMENTS (RUNNING AT SUBPAR FRAME RATES), HO-HUM TRANSPARENCIES, AND BAD MUSIC. ATARI SOLVED THE GAMEPLAY 19 YEARS AGO. ALL THIS UPDATE NEEDED WAS STYLISH PRESENTATION WORTHY OF THE PS. IT'S NOT HERE.



Battle Tanx • 3DO • 3DO

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 84)

IN BATTLETANX, THE TANK YOU GET TO CONTROL (INITIALLY) LOOKS MORE LIKE A SUBARU, THE TURRET IS WELDED INTO PLACE, BUILDINGS MELT RATHER THAN EXPLODE, AND AVOIDING HITS IS AT TIMES IMPOSSIBLE. BUT THE MULTIPLAYER GAME IS GOOD FUN, ALTHOUGH I BUY GAMES PRIMARILY FOR THE ONE-PLAYER ACTION.



- ABYSMAL GRAPHICS AND MUSIC MAKE THE BORING GAMEPLAY SEEM WORSE THAN IT IS.
- AN INEXCUSABLE LACK OF INDEPENDENT TURRET CONTROL MAKES AVOIDING HITS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE.

Mike Hobbs:

C-

WITH ALL THE EVANGELIZING THAT TRIP HAWKINS HAS DONE ABOUT 3DO AS A SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, ONE WOULD THINK THAT SOMETHING AS BLATANTLY SUBPAR AS BATTLETANX WOULD HAVE BEEN QUIETLY SWEEPED UNDER A RUG. I GUESS THE UNDISCRIMINATING N64 MARKET ALLOWS FOR SUCH MEDIOCRITY TO PASS FOR A GAME. IN THIS ONE- TO FOUR-PLAYER TITLE, USERS GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO PILOT A TANK THROUGH SOME OF THE WORST-LOOKING ENVIRONMENTS YET WITNESSED ON NINTENDO'S 64-BIT CONSOLE. UGLY TEXTURES, LIBERAL FOGGING, BORING LEVEL LAYOUTS, AND BLINDING SMOKE EFFECTS RELEGATE THE VISUAL PRESENTATION TO SECOND-RATE AT BEST. THE ONLY BRIGHT SPOTS ARE MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS THAT PROVE MARGINALLY FUN.



- I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS GAME IS DESIGNED FOR SIMPLE FUN. STILL, MORE GAMEPLAY DEPTH IS SERIOUSLY NEEDED.
- THE MULTIPLAYER MODE IS NICE, BUT THE FOGGY, FILTERED ENGINE DIES HERE. IT'S TOO BAD TO OVERLOOK.

Mike Griffin:

D+

IN ESSENCE, THIS GAME PROVIDES MINDLESS 3D BLASTING ACTION FOR UP TO FOUR PLAYERS. IN THIS RESPECT, BATTLETANX SUCCEEDS. THE ACTION IS SO BRAINLESS, HOWEVER, THAT I COULD NEVER RECOMMEND IT AS A PURCHASE. THIS IS A LAZY AFTERNOON RENTAL ONLY, BECAUSE IT SHOULDN'T TAKE MUCH MORE THAN AN HOUR FOR YOU TO REALIZE THE GLARING LACK OF DEPTH. FOR ONE THING, THE TANKS THEMSELVES ARE BEYOND BASIC. THERE'S NO SEPARATE COMMANDS FOR THE TURRET, NO UNIQUE STEERING FUNCTIONS (PERHAPS INVOLVING THE TANKS' TREADS), AND PAINFULLY LIMITED WEAPONS. WHAT'S WORSE, THE GRAPHICS ARE HYPER-FOGGY AND FILTERED, ESPECIALLY IN THE MULTIPLAYER MODES. BATTLETANX ISN'T TERRIBLE, BUT IT'S UNDENIABLY SUBPAR.



Colony Wars Vengeance • PSYGNOSIS

As Reviewed By: Grady Flechter (page 86)

AWASH IN MAMMOTH POLYGONAL MOTHER SHIPS, DETAILED AND CONVINCING SPACE ENVIRONMENTS, AND EXTRAVAGANT EFFECTS, COLONY WARS VENGEANCE BRINGS THE PLIGHT OF A FUTURISTIC WAR TO OUR SCREEN WITH ABSORBING STRENGTH.

B



- SAME HIGH LEVEL OF PRODUCTION RETURNS WITH BEAUTIFUL CG CUT SCENES AND SLICK-LOOKING ENGINE.
- IT MAY BE MORE OF THE SAME, BUT THE NEW MISSIONS ARE WELL DESIGNED AND SATISFYING.

Mike Hobbs:

B+

COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE OFFERS UP A DEARTH OF ENHANCEMENTS OVER ITS PREDECESSOR, SO DON'T EXPECT IT TO CONVERT ANYONE WHO FOUND THE ORIGINAL GAME DULL. FOR THE MANY WHO LOVED IT, HOWEVER, VENGEANCE IS A GREAT FOLLOWUP. SET 100 YEARS IN THE FUTURE AND PLAYED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NAVY, YOU'LL BE TREATED TO MORE DIVERSE AND LONGER MISSIONS, FOGGY BUT FUN GROUND-BASED LEVELS, AND A WHOLE NEW COMPLEMENT OF SHIPS TO COMMAND. A MUCH-NEEDED AFTERBURNER HAS ALSO BEEN ADDED TO YOUR IN-FLIGHT CAPABILITIES. THE SAME LEVEL OF HIGH QUALITY CG DETAILS THE UNFOLDING STORY WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS.



- WHILE SIMILAR TO THE ORIGINAL IN MANY WAYS, CWV IS A DEFINITE IMPROVEMENT OVERALL.
- FEELS TOO MUCH LIKE AN EXPANSION PACK AT TIMES. IS THAT GOOD OR BAD?

Dave Rees:

B

AS A FAN OF THE ORIGINAL GAME, MY ANTICIPATION WAS HIGH AS THE RELEASE DATE OF THIS TITLE APPROACHED. WHILE I FOUND THE FINAL PRODUCT GRATIFYING, I ALSO FELT A BIT LETDOWN BY ITS EXPANSION PACK APPEAL. THE STORY IS STILL A STRONG COMPONENT OF THE GAME, DRIVING THE OVERALL TONE WITH POWERFUL CUTSCENES THAT BRANCH DEPENDING ON YOUR PERFORMANCE. SOME OF THE MISSIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE THAT LEAVE THE UNRESTRICTED ARENA OF OUTERSPACE, ADD A NEW DIMENSION TO THE GAMEPLAY AND SHOW OFF THE 3D ENGINE IN A DIFFERENT, ALBEIT FOGGY, LIGHT. STILL, THIS GAME IS UNDENIABLY IN A LEAGUE BY ITSELF ON THE PLAYSTATION AND ENDS UP BEING A REWARDING EXPERIENCE.



Formula-1 '98 • VISUAL SCIENCES • PSYGNOSIS

As Reviewed By: Mike Hobbs (page 74)

AS WITH THE PREVIOUS ENTRIES IN THE SERIES, FORMULA 1 '98 IS BEST LEFT TO FANS OF THE SPORT (OF WHICH THERE ARE PROBABLY VERY FEW IN THE STATES). FOR THEM, THE STRICT, NO-DRIFTING STYLE OF GAMEPLAY AND REAL-WORLD COURSES AND DRIVERS ARE A TREAT.

B-



- THE GAMEPLAY DOES THE FORMULA 1 SPORT JUSTICE...
- ...AND THEN THE SLOPPY GRAPHICS PULL THE RUG RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER YOU WHILE TRYING TO ENJOY WHAT THE GAME HAS TO OFFER.

Grady Flechter:

C+

WHEN IT COMES TO DEPTH AND REALISM, IT TAKES A LOT OF SCRUTINY TO FIND FAULT WITH FORMULA 1 '98. A WEALTH OF AUTHENTIC TRACKS, DRIVERS, AND OPTIONS TO MANIPULATE THE CARS LEADS THE CHARGE OF DETAILS WILLING TO CARRY THE GAME TO GREATNESS. UNDERPINNING THE MANY EXTRAS IS GREAT GAMEPLAY, UNFORGIVING IN ITS REALISM AND STRINGENT PHYSICS. BUT WITH SHODDY VISUALS THAT UNDERMINE THE PLAYER'S ABILITY TO COMPLETELY APPRECIATE ALL THE DEPTH THE GAME HOLDS, EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE ENJOYED THE SERIES UP TO THIS POINT WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY ANOTHER F1 PURCHASE. AND FOR THOSE CASUAL RACING FANS STEEPED IN THE WAYS OF ARCADE GAMEPLAY - DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.



- HARD-CORE F1 FANS WON'T FIND A BETTER GAME ON THE PS... UNLESS THEY CONTINUE PLAYING LAST YEAR'S.
- DESPITE THE DEPTH OF THE SIM MODE, IT'S VERY HARD TO FEEL IMMersed WHEN THE COURSE IS GLITCHING SO MUCH.

Mike Griffin:

C

IF YOU'RE A SERIOUS FAN OF THE F1 SPORT, F1 '98 IS DEFINITELY WORTH INVESTIGATING. THE 1998 F1 GRAND PRIX SERIES AND SEASON IS REPRESENTED IN WHOLE, INCLUDING ALL THE FIA SCHEDULING AND DRIVERS. YOU CAN ENTER THE GRAND PRIX CHAMPIONSHIP RACE, WHICH CAN BE QUITE SATISFYING, AND THE CAR TUNING IS (PER USUAL) HYPER-DETAILED AND CUSTOMIZABLE. UNFORTUNATELY, CASUAL RACING-GAME FANS WILL HAVE A SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH THE PATHETIC GRAPHICS ENGINE. IT'S SO WEAK THAT IT DETRACTS FROM THE REALISM OF THE PRESENTATION AND WHOLESOMELY ANNIHILATES THE GAME'S VALUE AS A SIMULATED VISUAL SHOWCASE OF F1 RACING. STILL, THE GAMEPLAY IS USUALLY SOLID.



Magic Knight Rayearth • G.A. WORKING DESIGNS

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 75)

RAYEARTH MAY SEEM OLD AND DATED TO SOME, BUT I WELCOMED ITS HAND-DRAWN CHARMS. IT'S BEEN WAY TOO LONG SINCE I'VE PLAYED AN OLD-SCHOOL GAME LIKE THIS. THE ENGLISH DUB IS EXCELLENT, IF NOT WORKING DESIGNS' BEST TO DATE. BEING A FAN OF THE ANIME BY CLAMP, I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER. THE MUSIC IS PURE BLISS AS WELL.

A-



- BEAUTIFUL AND INCREASINGLY RARE HAND-DRAWN GRAPHICS ARE THE BIGGEST DRAW HERE.
- HAD THIS GAME COME OUT TWO YEARS AGO, IT MIGHT'VE SCORED AN A. NOW, IT SEEMS A BIT RUDIMENTARY.

Mike Hobbs:

B-

ONE OF THE FIRST TITLES RELEASED FOR THE JAPANESE SATURN, MKR SET A BENCHMARK FOR 2D GRAPHICS THAT WAS ONLY ECLIPSED IN THE ACTION/RPG GENRE BY A SMALL HANDFUL OF TITLES. AFTER AN INTERMINABLE DELAY, THE GAME'S FINALLY HERE IN ENGLISH FORM AND ANYONE WHO HAS AN INTEREST IN ACTION/RPGS WOULD DO THEMSELVES A GOOD SERVICE IN CHECKING IT OUT. WONDERFUL CHARACTER ANIMATION, BEAUTIFUL BACKGROUNDS, GREAT MUSIC, AND A REALLY FUN, IF STRAIGHTFORWARD, QUEST AWAITS. ONLY THE HO-HUM DUBBING, LONG, FIRST-GENERATION LOADING TIMES, AND SLIGHT LACK OF SOPHISTICATION DETRACT. WHAT A SHAME THAT THIS NICE LITTLE ACTION RPG IS COMING STATESIDE AFTER THE NAILS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRIVEN INTO THE SATURN'S COFFIN.



- ANIME FANS, SATURN FAITHFUL, AND ACTION/RPG GAMERS SHOULD PICK THIS ONE UP ASAP.
- BEAUTIFUL HAND-DRAWN ART, EXCELLENT MUSIC, DECENT U.S. VOICES, BUT THE GAMEPLAY IS MIERED IN THE PAST.

Mike Griffin:

B-

I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE IMPORT MKR TWO YEARS AGO. IT WAS EXACTLY THE TYPE OF GAME THAT WAS MAKING THE GENRE SUCH A HIT WITH JAPANESE GAMERS. AND THE ARTWORK... OH GOD, IT WAS (AND STILL IS) ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS. THE GREAT HAND-DRAWN IMAGES, COLORS, AND ANIMATION ARE SOME OF THE BEST EVER. SADLY, AS I PLAY THROUGH MKR NOW I REALIZE HOW CRUDE THE GAMEPLAY HAS BECOME. WITH CLASSIC RPGS (LIKE LUNAR:SSS) THIS DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. BATTLE SYSTEMS HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH, AND WITH GLORIOUSLY RETOUCHEE AESTHETICS, THEY'RE STILL VERY APPEALING. MKR, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS A COMPARATIVELY SIMPLE GAME IN THIS DAY AND AGE. THE GRAPHICS HAVE SURVIVED BUT ITS RUDIMENTARY PLAY-MECHANICS ARE MOSTLY OUTDATED.



COUNTER + POINT



Nightmare Creatures 64 • kalisto • Activision

As Reviewed By: Brady Fiechter (page 78)



NIGHTMARE CREATURES 64 SETS OUT TO ENGULF US IN A BROODING ATMOSPHERE AND POTENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH AWESOME MONSTERS, AND TO DO SO AS EFFECTIVELY AS THE ORIGINAL PLAYSTATION VERSION. IT SUCCEEDS ON ALL ACCOUNTS.



- SURPRISINGLY GOOD TEXTURES AND LACK OF BLURRING HIGHLIGHT THIS PS TO N64 CONVERSION.
- FAST-ACTION, THIRD-PERSON TITLES AREN'T EXACTLY A DIME A DOZEN ON N64.

Mike Hobbs:

B-

AS PLAYSTATION TO N64 CONVERSIONS GO, NIGHTMARE CREATURES HOLDS UP PRETTY WELL. CONSIDERING THE DIFFICULT TREK FROM CD TO CARTRIDGE, VERY LITTLE HAS BEEN LOST HERE. THE TEXTURES LOOK GOOD AND THE SOUND AND MUSIC ARE OF ACCEPTABLE QUALITY. AS FOR THE GAME ITSELF, IT'S IDENTICAL TO THE PS VERSION, MEANING YOU'LL FIND THE SAME, SATISFYING, COMBO HEAVY HACK AND SLASH ACTION AND MOODY TONE. THE FLIP SIDE OF THIS IS THAT YOU'LL ALSO FIND THE SAME ANNOYANCES THAT ACCOMPANIED THE PS VERSION—NAMESLY A TWITCHY CAMERA AND SOMETIMES FRUSTRATING CONTROL. OBVIOUSLY, THERE'S NOTHING HERE FOR OWNERS OF THE ORIGINAL, BUT N64 USERS WILL FIND A DECENT ACTION GAME.



- WOW! KALISTO DID IT! THIS IS VIRTUALLY THE SAME GAME AS THE PS VERSION, WITH BETTER CONTROLS.
- THE GAME ITSELF (ON ANY FORMAT) ISN'T POLISHED ENOUGH FOR MY LIKING. THE GAMEPLAY IS PRETTY LIMITED.

Mike Griffin:

B-

IN NIGHTMARE CREATURES THE WELL-DESIGNED BEASTS TAKE CENTER STAGE. COMBINED WITH ATMOSPHERIC, FEAR-INDUCING ENVIRONMENTS, NC CAN BE HIGHLY INVOLVING WHEN YOU FIRST EXPERIENCE THE GAME. EVEN THOUGH I'M A HUGE FAN OF DARK AND MOODY SETTINGS, I'M A BIGGER FAN OF ORIGINAL, QUALITY GAMEPLAY. NC HAS SOME CONTROL ISSUES (WHICH HAVE BEEN REMEDIED SLIGHTLY IN THIS VERSION), BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT'S PLAGUED BY MUNDANE GAMEPLAY LIMITATIONS. LET'S JUST SAY THE DISMEMBERMENT COMBOS GET OLD QUICKLY BECAUSE THERE'S NOT MUCH CREATIVITY INVOLVED. REGARDLESS, SLAUGHTERING WICKED HELL-SPAWNED ABOMINATIONS CAN BE FUN, AND IT GETS NICE AND GRIM SOMETIMES. THIS IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THE BEST N64 GAMES THIS SEASON.



Rally Cross 2 • sony interactive • Sony

As Reviewed By: Mike Hobbs (page 79)



WITH RALLY CROSS 2, 989 STUDIOS CONTINUES TO BUILD ON THEIR REPUTATION OF DELIVERING STRONG TITLES THAT JUST FALL SHY OF GREATNESS. EXCELLENT COURSE DESIGN AND A STRONG TWO PLAYER MODE (UP TO FOUR WITH LINK) MAKE IT WORTH PLAYING.



- THE EXAGGERATED OFF-ROAD PHYSICS TAKE GETTING USED TO, BUT I LOVE IT.
- A RURAL AIRPORT SETTING IS A STANDOUT IN A LINE OF EXCELLENT LEVEL ARCHITECTURES.

Brady Fiechter:

B+

ONE OF MY FAVORITE RACING GAMES OF THE YEAR, RALLY CROSS 2 DRAWS ITS SUCCESS FROM DIVERSE, CREATIVE COURSES, EXCELLENT GRAPHICS AND SOUND, AND STEEP CHALLENGE. LIKE THE ORIGINAL, THE FEEL OF THE CARS IS A BIT AWKWARD, TAKING THE PHYSICS OF OFF-ROAD RACING IN A MORE EXAGGERATED DIRECTION—DEFINITELY AN ACQUIRED TASTE. WHILE NOT AS FRUSTRATING AS THE FIRST GAME, KEEPING THE CAR UPRIGHT CAN STILL PROVE A FORMIDABLE TASK AND THE WINDING COURSES CAN LIMIT YOUR VIEW, BUT FOR ITS UNIQUE AND SKILLFUL PRESENTATION ALL AROUND, RALLY CROSS 2 DELIVERS AN EXCELLENT AND UNIQUE RACING EXPERIENCE.



- STRONG TRACK DESIGN FOR THE MOST PART, WHICH IS BASICALLY A SHOWCASE FOR THE COMPETENT ENGINE.
- SOMETIMES THIS COMPLEX PHYSICS MODEL IS A LITTLE AGGRAVATING. THE CARS BOUNCE AROUND LIKE BALLOONS!

Mike Griffin:

B

I PRAISE 989'S GOOD TRACK DESIGN BUT I STILL CAN'T DEAL WITH THE HYPERACTIVE PHYSICS. I WAS SURE THE BALLOONISH, BOUNCY PHYSICS MODEL OF THE FIRST GAME WOULD GO AWAY, BUT IT'S ONLY RETURNED WITH A VENGEANCE. IT REALLY BUGS ME BECAUSE IT'S JUST NOT REALISTIC—IT'S BEYOND REAL LIFE. THE BEHAVIOR OF THE VEHICLES IS SOMETIMES JUST BIZARRE. BUT WHEN EVERYTHING'S GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN, IT'S EASY TO HAVE A GOOD TIME WITH RC 2. THE CARS AND TRUCKS OFFER AN INTERESTING DESIGN AND THERE ARE QUITE A FEW TRACKS. I ALSO LIKE THE TRACK EDITOR AND THE FACT THAT YOU CAN RACE YOUR DESIGNS SPLIT-SCREEN.



Roll Away • Game Design Sweden • Psygnosis

As Reviewed By: Brady Fiechter (page 86)



NAVIGATING THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL PLANES IN ROLL AWAY IS ONE OF THE MOST STIMULATING MIND EXERCISES YOU'RE LIKELY TO ENGAGE IN WHILE PLAYING A VIDEO GAME. HUGE—LY ORIGINAL AND INSIDIOUSLY ADDICTING, THE GAME ENTERTAINS ON A RARE LEVEL.



- SATISFIES THE VISUAL AND AURAL SENSE WITH CLEAN, 60FPS GRAPHICS AND APPEALING MUSIC.
- UNIQUE PLAY STYLE ENCOURAGES THREE-DIMENSIONAL THINKING; THAT HAS TO BE GOOD FOR SOMETHING.

Mike Hobbs:

B

UNLIKE ANY PUZZLE GAME YOU'VE PLAYED BEFORE, ROLL AWAY FROM PSYGNOSIS AND DEVELOPERS GAME DESIGN SWEDEN CASTS YOU AS A RUBBER BALL, AND JUDGING BY THE REACTION OF FELLOW EDITORS, THE IDEA OF CONTROLLING A RUBBER BALL WILL BE NONE TOO APPEALING TO MOST. SETTING BALL PREJUDICE ASIDE, A VERY ADDICTIVE AND UNIQUE PUZZLE EXPERIENCE IS TO BE HAD HERE. INDEED, THE GAME FORCES YOU TO THINK IN NEW AND VERY THREE-DIMENSIONAL WAYS. WHETHER THIS WILL APPEAL TO THE AVERAGE ACTION GAMER IS BEYOND MY REALM OF EXPERTISE, BUT PUZZLE FANS WILL GET AN EXCELLENT WORKOUT WITH ROLL AWAY.



- THE PUZZLE CONCEPT IN ROLL AWAY IS STRICTLY LOVE-IT-OR-HATE-IT STUFF. PERSONALLY, I THINK IT WORKS.
- THE 60 FPS GRAPHICS ARE SIMPLE BUT VERY APPEALING, AND THE LEVEL DESIGN IS INTELLIGENT AND PROGRESSIVE.

Mike Griffin:

B

PSYGNOSIS' ROLL AWAY REALLY STANDS OUT FROM THE MASS OF PUZZLE CLONES. YOUR ICON (FOR INDEED, PUZZLE GAMES ARE RARELY CHARACTER-DRIVEN) IS A BEACH BALL. YOUR GOAL IS TO COLLECT THE KEY FOR EACH LEVEL IN ORDER TO ADVANCE. ALONG THE WAY THERE ARE COINS TO COLLECT FOR POINTS AND EXTRA LIVES. THE REAL FUN INVOLVES THE UNIQUE CONSTRUCTION OF EACH LEVEL AND THE GRAVITY-DEFYING MEASURES YOU'LL BE TAKING TO NAVIGATE THE FLOATING STRIPS. ALSO, THE GAME MOVES ALONG AT A BLAZING 60 FPS, WHICH IS REALLY SOOTHING TO WATCH OVER THE COURSE OF SEVERAL HOURS. NOT SINCE I.Q. HAS A 3D PUZZLE GAME BEEN SO ATTRACTIVE AND REFRESHING. IT'S HARMLESS, SUNDAY-AFTERNOON PUZZLING ACTION. GREAT TO PLAY BETWEEN SERIOUS GAMES.



SCARS • ubisoft • ubisoft

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 86)

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED SCARS ON THE PLAYSTATION, AND SO REVVING UP THE 64-BIT VERSION I HAD HIGH HOPES FOR AN EVEN BETTER RIDE. SADLY, HOWEVER, SCARS ON THE N64 ISN'T QUITE AS GOOD. THE GAME STILL RANKS AMONG THE BEST FOR THE SYSTEM, THOUGH, AS THE VEHICULAR RACING/COMBAT FIELD ISN'T EXACTLY OVERFLOWING ON THE N64.

B-

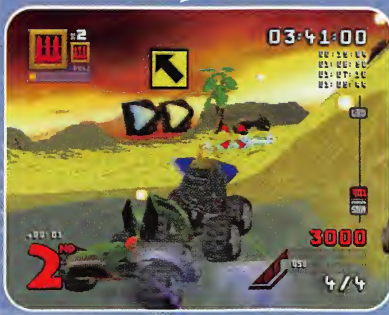


- IMPRESSIVE COURSES AND FUNKY CAR DESIGN PROVIDE A GOOD SCI-FI ALTERNATIVE TO MARIO KART AND DIDDY.
- SLIGHTLY SLUGGISH CONTROL RENDERS THE GAME ULTIMATELY LESS SATISFYING THAN THE COMPETITION.

Mike Hobbs:

B

UBISOFT HAVE QUICKLY GAINED A REPUTATION FOR MAKING GOOD-LOOKING GAMES, AND SCARS FOR THE N64 CONTINUES THIS ENVIABLE TRACK RECORD. THIS FUNKY COMBAT RACER SERVES UP ANIMAL-LIKE CARS AND A GOOD SELECTION OF ON-TRACK WEAPONS WITH WHICH TO SLOW DOWN YOUR COMPETITION. I PARTICULARLY LIKE A TICKING TIME BOMB PICK-UP WHICH CAN BE TOSSED AROUND LIKE A HOT POTATO AS IT COUNTS DOWN TO EXPLOSION. HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING LACKING IN THE RACING ASPECT OF SCARS. THE GAME IS VERY WEAPONS-INTENSIVE BY NATURE, BUT THE CARS ALL FEEL A LITTLE CUMBERSOME WHEN NEGOTIATING THE COURSES. STILL, THERE'S NO DENYING THE FUN OF THE VERY PLAYABLE SPLIT SCREEN MODES.



- COLORFUL, BLITHE STYLE AND EMPHASIS ON COMBAT EXACTLY WHAT I DIG FOR A RACER - A NATURAL N64 TITLE.
- SCARS IS MORE FOR THE CASUAL RACING FAN OR GAMER WHO NORMALLY DOESN'T CARE FOR THE GENRE.

Brady Fiechter:

B

RICH, VIBRANT COLORS, GREAT VARIETY AND DESIGN IN THE TRACKS, AND AN OVERALL APPEALING STYLE TO THE CARS AND SCENERY PUNCTUATE THE SURPRISINGLY ENTERTAINING SCARS, A CARTOON-TINGED RACING/COMBAT GAME SET TO OCCUPY SOME EMPTY SPACE ON N64. THE KIND OF GAME THAT GROWS BETTER WITH EACH NEW TRACK, SCARS' APPEAL CULMINATES IN HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION. IT'S NO DIDDY KONG OR MARIO KART - THE OBVIOUS COMPARISONS - BUT WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING FOR MORE OF WHAT THESE TITLES OFFERED, SCARS SLIDES IN FOR A TEMPORARY BUT SATISFYING SUBSTITUTE.



Shogo • Monolith • Monolith

As Reviewed By: David Hodgson (page 80)

WHETHER YOU'RE A FAN OF ANIME OR THE SIMPLE PLEASURES OF QUAKE 2 BLOODLETTING, SHOGO OFFERS A STYLISH TAKE ON THE FIRST-PERSON SHOOTING GENRE WITH IMPRESSIVE VISUALS AND EFFECTS, EXCELLENT SOUND AND AN EXCITING ONE-PLAYER GAME. HOWEVER, A LACK OF ENEMIES AND SOME STRANGE-LOOKING CHARACTER MODELS SPOIL THE FUN.

B



- AN ENCOURAGING SIGN OF WHAT THE LITTECH ENGINE IS CAPABLE OF.
- SHOGO TAKES A BLOW FOR ITS LACK OF REPLAY VALUE AND MECH ELEMENTS.

Dave Rees:

B-

INITIALLY, I WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH SHOGO. THE ANIME THEME AND COMBINATION OF MECH COMBAT GIVE THE GAME A SWEEPING AURA THAT DOES WELL NEXT TO OTHER FPS TITLES. ADDITIONALLY, IT WAS GREAT TO FINALLY SEE THE LITTECH ENGINE MAKE ITS DEBUT IN A FINISHED PRODUCT. PARTICLE EFFECTS, GREAT EXPLOSIONS, TEXTURES, AND AN ATMOSPHERE TEEMING WITH AMBIENCE ALL COME TOGETHER WELL, PRODUCING A HIGHLY SUSPENSEFUL EXPERIENCE AT TIMES. BUT WHY AM I NOT STILL PLAYING IT? THE GAME JUST DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME LONG-TERM APPEAL AS I HAD HOPED. PERHAPS THE MECH THEME, WHICH I DON'T FIND VERY APPEALING IN THE FIRST PLACE, RUINED IT FOR ME. MONOLITH'S NEXT TITLE, BLOOD 2, IS MORE IN LINE WITH MY DESIRES.



- THE GUNS SOUND AND FEEL GREAT, THE ENEMIES DIE EXTREMELY WELL, AND THE ENGINE WAS NICE...
- ...BUT I DIDN'T CARE FOR ANYTHING ELSE THIS TITLE OFFERED.

Ryan Lockhart:

C

IN A PERFECT WORLD, FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS WOULD BE RATED ON NOTHING MORE THAN HOW THEIR WEAPONS SOUND AND FEEL. UNFORTUNATELY FOR MONOLITH, IN THIS COLD, HARD, REAL WORLD WE ALL LIVE IN, THINGS LIKE AI, THEME, CONTROL, LENGTH OF PLAY, AND OTHER ISSUES SOMETIMES COME INTO PLAY. A PART OF ME TRULY ENJOYS SHOGO, MAINLY BECAUSE THE GAME MAKES IT REALLY, REALLY FUN TO SHOOT THINGS. THE GUNS HAVE THIS MEATY SOUND AND... WELL, IT'S JUST FUN, DAMMIT. IF YOU DON'T CARE TOO MUCH ABOUT SUBSTANCE IN YOUR SHOOTERS, YOU MIGHT HAVE A BLAST WITH SHOGO. FOR THE REST OF US, SAVE YOUR MONEY AND WAIT FOR SIN AND HALF-LIFE...



Smurfs Nightmare • infogrames • Ocean

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 87)

MY COMRADES SHOULD HAVE PLAYED ON. SMURFS NIGHTMARE GROWS MUCH MORE COMPLEX AS THE GAME PROGRESSES, BECOMING MUCH RICHER IN DIVERSITY AND PLAY MECHANICS. THE GRAPHICS CONTINUE TO AMAZE THROUGHOUT, AS THIS IS TECHNICALLY THE MOST ADVANCED GB TITLE EVER MADE. THE MUSIC IS PRETTY HURTIN', THOUGH.

B-



- A LARGE ARRAY OF SUPERB COLORS AND BACKGROUNDS MAKE THIS VISUALLY APPEALING, ESPECIALLY FOR GB.
- A LACK OF CHECK POINTS, MUSIC, AND THE SHEER REPETITION OF THE GAME CAUSED A LOSS OF INTEREST.

Angela Harrod:

C+

THIS WAS THE FIRST GAMEBOY COLOR GAME I PLAYED AND WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED BY THE NEW ARRAY OF COLORS AND CLARITY IN SMURFS NIGHTMARE. IT'S YOUR STANDARD PLATFORM FARE OF JUMP, COLLECT AND FIND, AND THAT IN ITSELF IS ENJOYABLE. THE LEVELS ARE A DECENT LENGTH, WITH ONE ANNOYING POINT: THERE ARE NO CHECK POINTS. LOSE ALL YOUR HEARTS (WHICH YOU WILL A FEW TIMES), THEN YOU HAVE TO START AT THE BEGINNING OF THE LEVEL, MAKING THINGS PRETTY REPETITIOUS. THIS ASIDE, IT'S AN AVERAGE TO DECENT ROMP FOR PLATFORM FANS. BUT BEWARE, THE MUSIC MIGHT DRIVE YOU CRAZY!



- SMURFS FEATURES SOME REALLY TOP-NOTCH GRAPHICS LATER ON IN THE GAME.
- GAMEPLAY CAN BECOME REPETITIOUS AND THE LACK OF RESTART POINTS CAN BE FRUSTRATING.

Bryn Williams:

C

I HAVE NEVER BEEN A BIG FAN OF THE SMURFS... THEY ALWAYS SCARED ME AS A CHILD (SO DID THAT EVIL BALDY BLOKE), BUT I MUST CONFESS THAT THIS PARTICULAR GBC TITLE HAS SOME APPEAL. WHILE NOT BEING THE MOST COMPLEX OF PLATFORMERS (MOVES ARE EXTREMELY SIMPLE), IT DOES DEMONSTRATE SOME TRULY GORGEOUS MULTILEVEL PARALLAX SCROLLING, AS WELL AS VIBRANT, CRISP ANIMATIONS AND GRAPHICS. IT IS DEFINITELY A WORTHY ADDITION TO YOUR COLLECTION, IF PLATFORMING IS WHAT YOU ENJOY THE MOST (OTHERWISE GO FOR WARIO!). ULTIMATELY, SMURFS NIGHTMARE IS BEST SUITED TO THE YOUNGER GBC AUDIENCE, AND PERSONALLY, I'LL GO WITH THE ANTI-MARIO EVIL MOUSTACHIOED GUY EVERY TIME.



COUNTER + POINT



Test Drive Off Road 2 • Accolade • Activision

As Reviewed By: Mike Griffin (page 87)

TDOR 2 DRAGS THE ORIGINAL TITLE THROUGH THE PROVERBIAL MUD AND BACK AGAIN. WHOOPIE... THE ORIGINAL SUCKED. TO ACCOLADE'S CREDIT, THEIR IN-HOUSE TEAM HAS CONSTRUCTED SEVERAL INTERESTING COURSES USING TEST DRIVE 4'S STRONG ENGINE. TOO BAD YOU'RE RACING BUDGET VEHICLES. ALSO, THE TERRAIN PHYSICS CAN BE RIDICULOUS.



- RACING AROUND IN A BUNCH OF REAL-WORLD TRUCKS JUST ISN'T THAT COOL.
- LONG COURSES PROBABLY LOOK GOOD ON PAPER, BUT IN REALITY PROVE TO BE A BORE.

Mike Hobbs:

C-

THERE'S SOMETHING VAGUELY LAME ABOUT TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD 2. I THINK IT HAS TO DO WITH THE LAMENESS OF RACING AROUND A TRACK IN A PICK-UP TRUCK. SURE, THERE ARE OTHER, MORE INTERESTING VEHICLES TO BE HAD, BUT IT'S MOSTLY JUST REGULAR TRUCKS, AND RACING TRUCKS IS SIMPLY NOT VERY APPEALING. THERE ISN'T ENOUGH FANTASY THERE. BUT I COULD GET OVER THIS IF THE GAME WAS REALLY FUN; ALAS, IT'S NOT. THE CONTROL IS DECENT ENOUGH, BUT THE REAL PROBLEM LIES IN THE COURSE DESIGN. AS THE TRACKS STREAM OFF THE CD, THEY CAN BE VERY LONG - TOO LONG, IN FACT. A TYPICAL COURSE LASTS ABOUT SIX MINUTES. YOU'RE BORED AFTER ABOUT THREE.



- ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR GENRES ON THE PS DOES NOT NEED ANOTHER MEDIOCRE (AT BEST) RACER.
- THE GAME IS PRETTY UGLY AND THE MUSIC WILL MAKE YOUR DOG SCRATCH THROUGH THE DOOR.

Dave Halverson:

D-

IF THEY LET YOU TEST DRIVE TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD 2, THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T SELL VERY MANY. THIS TIME AROUND, AS THE MUSIC DRONES ON AND GRATES YOUR SENSES, YOU TRAVERSE VARIABLE TERRAIN VIA THE DUAL SHOCK AMONG DIVERSE LOCALES WITH A FAIR SHARE OF SEAM SPLITTING AND RATHER UNEVENTFUL (BUT LONG!) COURSE DESIGN - COMPLETE WITH SPORADICALLY SPRINKLED PYGMY SHRUBS AND IFFY COLLISION. SERIOUSLY, WITH OFF-ROAD GAMES LIKE RC2 AND SCARS AROUND, WHY ANYONE WOULD INVEST IN THIS SLEEP-INDUCING RACER IS BEYOND ME. IN A CATEGORY ALREADY BRIMMING WITH POSSIBILITIES, I CAN SEE NO REASON TO WEATHER THE MUNDANE HUMS OF YET ANOTHER QUIVER OF TRUCKS I'D NEVER DRIVE IN THE FIRST PLACE.



Tiny Tank • Appaloosa • MGM

As Reviewed By: Brady Flechter (page 87)

WITH GOOD LIGHTING EFFECTS, CLEAN ENVIRONMENTS, BIG EXPLOSIONS AND IMPRESSIVE MECHANICAL ADVERSARIES, TINY TANK WANTS TO IMPRESS US WITH ITS LOOKS. THE GAME TREADS LIBERALLY IN TYPICAL YET SOLID ACTION-BASED MISSIONS, BUT WHEN ANY MOMENTUM BEGINS TO BUILD, THE STRUGGLING FRAME RATE BRINGS THE GAME TO A HALT.



- AN ATTRACTIVE ENGINE MARRED BY SERIOUS CHUGGING WHEN MORE THAN A FEW ENEMIES ARE ON SCREEN.
- GAMEPLAY IS FUN, DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS OF THE SLOW ENGINE TO RUIN YOUR GOOD TIME.

Mike Hobbs:

C+

THERE'S NO DENYING THE UNIQUENESS OF THIS LITTLE ACTION GAME. AS A WISE-CRACKING, ONE-TANK DEMOLITION TEAM, TINY TANK TRUNDLES THROUGH SOME NEAT-LOOKING LEVELS DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT. IT'S A GENERALLY GOOD LOOKING GAME, WITH ITS ONLY REAL FAULT BEING A SEVERE FRAME RATE PROBLEM WHEN THE ACTION HEATS UP. TINY TANK ALSO SPORTS A WRY SENSE OF HUMOR THROUGHOUT, ESPECIALLY DURING MOCK RADIO BROADCASTS THAT YOU'LL HEAR DURING THE GAME. UNFORTUNATELY, AS WITH MOST CHARACTERS WHO CRACK WISE DURING PLAY, TINY TANK REPEATS PHRASES ALL TOO OFTEN AND YOU END UP JUST TURNING HIM DOWN. STILL, THIS IS A GOOD-LOOKING ACTION EFFORT FROM APPALOOSA.



- A CHARMING GAME THAT USES CLEVER VOICE-OVERS AND A HUMOROUS SOUNDTRACK TO SPICE UP THE ACTION.
- THE ENGINE TENDS TO HAVE A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN WHEN IT CANNOT HANDLE THE ACTION.

Dave Rees:

C

IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE CHARM THAT TINY TANK EXUDES. HIS STROKES OF WITTCISM AND ATTITUDE ALONE ADD AN ENDEARING DIMENSION TO A GAMING EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE AN AVERAGE 3D SHOOTER. UNFORTUNATELY, THE REASON FOR THIS MEDIOCRITY IS SIMPLY BECAUSE OF ITS 3D ENGINE. I HATE TO SOUND SUPERFICIAL, BECAUSE THE LEVEL DESIGN AND OVERALL GAMEPLAY ARE EXEMPLARY AND WITH A GREAT ENGINE THIS GAME WOULD BE A KEEPER, BUT WHEN THINGS REALLY HEAT UP, THE FRAME RATE DIVES, THE POLYGONAL SEAMS BURST, AND THE POLYGONS HEAD FOR THE NEAREST EXIT. STILL, THE GAME REMAINS AN APPEALING ADDITION TO THE PLAYSTATION'S ABUNDANT LIBRARY AND IT WILL SURELY FIND AN AUDIENCE.



Twisted Edge • Boss/Kemco/Midway

As Reviewed By: Mike Griffin (page 85)

SERIOUS COMPETITION FOR 1080? NAH. TWISTED EDGE SNOWBOARDING IS A TWISTED LITTLE PRODUCT PACKED WITH TRACKS, TRICKS AND A WHOLE LOTTA' FRUSTRATION. WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO COMPETENT PLAY TESTING? AND WHEN ARE DEVELOPERS GOING TO REALIZE THAT SNOWBOARDING GAMES ARE ALL ABOUT INTUITIVE, TOTALLY ACCESSIBLE CONTROLS?



- INFERIOR TO NINTENDO'S 1080 IN VIRTUALLY EVERY CATEGORY. WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO SAY?
- ONLY THOSE DESPERATE FOR NEW BOARDING THRILLS SHOULD MAYBE BOTHER WITH A RENTAL.

Mike Hobbs:

C-

WHEN A PRODUCT AS SUPERIOR AS NINTENDO'S 1080 ALREADY EXISTS, A GAME LIKE TWISTED EDGE HAS LITTLE CHANCE OF GETTING GAMERS' ATTENTION. BUT EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH A QUALITY TITLE, I DOUBT ANYONE WOULD REALLY ENJOY THIS. THE CONTROL IS SUBPAR, THE COURSES DULL, AND THE GRAPHICS, SAVE FOR A NICE ICE EFFECT, GIVE LITTLE OF THE ALL-IMPORTANT SENSATION OF BLASTING DOWN A SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAIN. PULLING OFF TRICKS ALSO LACKS THE SATISFACTION OF NINTENDO'S TITLE. THAT MAKES FOUR STRIKES. IT'S TOUGH COMPETING WITH A GAMING POWERHOUSE LIKE NINTENDO, BUT THERE'S SIMPLY NOTHING HERE TO RECOMMEND TWISTED EDGE OVER 1080.



- ALTHOUGH FAIR, SAVE SOME ANTI-ALIASING PROBLEMS, THE GRAPHICS ARE NOT ON PAR WITH 1080'S.
- BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE AERIALS ARE EASY TO PULL OFF AND THE MUSIC IS VERY GOOD.

Dave Halverson:

C+

BOSS STUDIO'S MUCH-ANTICIPATED SNOWBOARDING GAME NEEDED TO DO ONE VERY IMPORTANT THING: BE BETTER THAN 1080. AND WHILE TWISTED EDGE ISN'T EXACTLY WHAT I'D CALL A BAD GAME, IT DOES FALL SHORT OF THE BENCHMARK IN SOME KEY AREAS: MOST NOTABLY, GRAPHICS AND PSYCHICS, TWO VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN A SNOWBOARDING TITLE. I LIKE THE MUSIC, WIDE TRACKS, ART STYLE, AND SIMPLIFIED TRICK SCHEME; IT ALL JUST NEEDED TO BE PRESENTED IN A BETTER-LOOKING AND -PLAYING PACKAGE. IF YOU'RE A DIE-HARD BOARDER AND CAN'T GET ENOUGH, BY ALL MEANS, PICK IT UP. THERE'S SOME GOOD FUN TO BE HAD, BUT IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE NEXT BENCHMARK AFTER 1080, KEEP LOOKING.



Twisted Metal 3 • 989 studios • 989 studios

As Reviewed By: Mike Griffin (page 82)



WITH SO MUCH RIDING ON THE BIG TWISTED METAL SEQUEL, 989 TAKES OVER AND PULLS OUT A WINNER. AND ALTHOUGH THEY'VE TAKEN THE SERIES INTO A NEW REALM OF STYLE AND GAMEPLAY, THE THOUSANDS OF TM2 FANS OUT THERE SHOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO PICK THIS ONE UP. HOT GRAPHICS, GOOD CONTROL, AND JUICY MULTIPLAYER MODES ABOUND.



- ALL-NEW ENGINE RENDERS SOME IMPRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTS AND EFFECTS.
- FACES STIFF COMPETITION FROM NEWCOMER VIGILANTE 8, BUT KEEPS THE TACKY TWISTED METAL CHARM.

Mike Hobbs:

B-

I'VE NEVER BEEN A HUGE FAN OF CAR COMBAT GAMES, BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT TWISTED METAL 3 IS FUN. WHILE VIGILANTE 8 REALLY RAISED THE BAR IN THIS CATEGORY, TM3 SERVES UP ITS PARTICULAR STYLE OF ACTION WITH NO APOLOGIES AND HOLDS ITS OWN QUITE WELL, NEW PHYSICS ENGINE AND ALL. THE CARNAGE IS NON-STOP AND THE LARGE ENVIRONMENTS ARE IMPRESSIVE. I'M NOT CRAZY, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE VERY AMERICAN CHARACTERS IN ALL THEIR HARD-EDGED "ZANINESS," BUT THIS TACKY STYLE HAS SERVED THIS SERIES WELL AND SHOULD PLEASE FANS OF THE PREVIOUS OUTINGS. STILL, THE TWISTED METAL SERIES IS GETTING A LITTLE LONG IN THE TOOTH, AND IT REALLY NEEDS TO PROGRESS.



- A SURPRISING EFFORT BY 989, ESPECIALLY IN THE ABSENCE OF SINGLE TRAC.
- IT DOESN'T BEAT VIGILANTE 8, BUT WILL STILL PLEASE FANS OF THE SERIES.

Dave Rees:

B

WHY AM I SURPRISED THAT TWISTED METAL 3 TURNED OUT TO BE A DECENT GAME? IS IT BECAUSE I DO NOT ENJOY DRIVING A VEHICLE THAT WOULD MAKE 007'S MASTER OF CONTRAPIONS, Q, JEALOUS? NOPE. IS IT BECAUSE I HATE CRUISING ACROSS OUTRAGEOUS ARENAS DESTROYING ANYTHING THAT GETS IN MY WAY? NOT REALLY. IS IT BECAUSE I TYPICALLY DON'T LIKE THIS GENRE? NEGATIVE. 989 TOOK THE REIGNS FROM SINGLE TRAC, BUILT A NEW ENGINE, MAINTAINED THE SAME ATTITUDE, ADDED AN AWESOME LINK MODE, AND ENDED UP WITH A PRODUCT THAT BEATS ROGUE TRIP HANDS DOWN. WHILE I STILL VOTE V8 AS THE BEST COMBAT RACING GAME OF THE YEAR, WITH ITS UNDENIABLE POPULARITY, TWISTED METAL 3 IS LIKELY TO TAILGATE THE COMPETITION UNTIL THE END.



WarioLand II • Nintendo • Nintendo

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 87)



MUCH TO MY DISMAY, WARIO LAND 2 FOR THE GAMEBOY COLOR IS MERELY A COLORIZED VERSION OF THE PREVIOUSLY RELEASED GAME. SO ON THE ONE HAND, IF YOU ALREADY OWN IT, THERE'S NOT MUCH REASON TO BUY THE COLOR VERSION (ALTHOUGH IT LOOKS MARKEDLY BETTER). ON THE OTHER, IF IT'S NEW TO YOU, YOU'RE IN FOR HOURS OF GREAT FUN, IN COLOR!



- A CLASSIC COLOR RENDITION OF A GAMEBOY CLASSIC, WITH A DEEP VARIETY OF GAMEPLAY.
- EXCELLENT EXTRA FEATURES SUCH AS MINI GAMES, THE VARIOUS FACETS OF WARIO HIMSELF AND HIDDEN REWARDS.

Angela Harrod:

B+

WARIO LAND 2 WAS RELEASED A WHILE AGO FOR THE REGULAR GAMEBOY, BUT IT IS SO MUCH BETTER IN COLOR. GAMEPLAY MAY SEEM A BIT SIMPLE AT FIRST: COLLECT THE COINS, FALL DOWN, COLLECT SOME MORE. BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE TO IT THAN THAT. THERE ARE ALSO MINI GAMES, GOALS TO REACH, AND REWARDS FOR YOUR SUCCESS. AND IT'S GOOD TO SEE WARIO'S TRANSFORMATIONS ARE STILL IN THERE, ESPECIALLY MY FAVORITE: DRUNKEN WARIO. ANOTHER GREAT THING IS THAT YOU CAN'T DIE. YOU JUST SIMPLY START A BIT FARTHER BACK, WHICH LESSENS THE FRUSTRATION WITHOUT MAKING THINGS TOO EASY. THIS IS GREAT GAMEBOY STUFF... NOT QUITE MARIO LAND, BUT DEFINITELY WORTH A PLAY.



- A LITTLE BIT OF CLASSIC NINTENDO PLATFORMING MAGIC, NOW IN COLOR!
- A MAJOR CHALLENGE LIES IN COLLECTING ALL THE TREASURE AND ALL THE PUZZLE PIECES. BETTER!

Bryn Williams:

B

THE ANTI-MARIO IS BACK AND THIS TIME HE'S IN COLOR. I'M STILL GETTING OVER JUST HOW INCREDIBLE THE COLOR GAMEBOY HARDWARE REALLY IS, AND WARIO LAND 2 IS THE PERFECT GAME TO CONVERT FROM HUMDRUM GRAY-SCALE TO VIBRANT COLOR. THE GAME IS SURPRISINGLY DEEP AND IN ORDER TO COLLECT ALL OF THE TREASURES AND PUZZLE-PIECES, IT WILL TAKE COMPETENT GAMERS A GOOD FEW EVENINGS OF SOLID PLAY. WARIO CHARGES, STOMPS, JUMPS, GETS DRUNK, SQUASHED AND EVEN TURNED INTO AN ICE BLOCK! THIS ALL ADDS UP TO LEGENDARY NINTENDO PLATFORMING ACTION. GET A GAMEBOY COLOR AND GET WARIO LAND 2 (EVEN IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PLAYED IT!).



Wipeout 64 • Psygnosis • Psygnosis

As Reviewed By: Dave Halverson (page 85)



WHILE THE END PRODUCT FOR THE N64 IS INDEED A FAIRLY ENTERTAINING VERSION EXCLUSIVE TO THE SYSTEM, IT DOESN'T REALLY OFFER ANYTHING BEYOND THE ORIGINAL. IN FACT, IT OFFERS LESS IN THE ONE-PLAYER GAME. IN THE END, WIPEOUT 64 FALLS SHORT OF MY HIGH EXPECTATIONS.



- N64 OWNERS CAN GET A TASTE OF PSYGNOSIS' AWESOME, SPEEDY SERIES...
- ...BUT THIS VERSION PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE PS ORIGINALS, EVEN WITH FOUR-PLAYER SPLIT SCREEN IN TOW.

Mike Hobbs:

C

IT WAS WITH SOME EXCITEMENT THAT PSYGNOSIS ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE BRINGING ONE OF THEIR BEST SERIES TO THE N64. WIPEOUT WAS GOING 64 BIT, AND IN THE PROCESS WOULD BE PICKING UP A FOUR-PLAYER MODE AND FEATURE ALL NEW TRACKS. THE SAD REALITY, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE FOUR-PLAYER MODE BORDERS ON UNPLAYABLE AND THE NEW COURSES DON'T HOLD A CANDLE TO THOSE IN THE ORIGINAL WIPEOUT OR XL. CONCERNING THE FOUR-PLAYER MODE, THE TRACKSIDE GRAPHICS ARE GONE, WHICH IS UNDERSTANDABLE, BUT THE SEVERE DRAW-IN MAKES THE EXPERIENCE FAR MORE FRUSTRATING THAN FUN. STICK WITH F-ZERO X OR BUY A PLAYSTATION.



- JUST HOW MUCH MORE SPEED CAN A WIPEOUT GAME - OR ANY RACING GAME FOR THAT MATTER - POSSIBLY ACHIEVE?
- THE RAZOR-SHARP EDGE OF THE WIPEOUT SERIES HAS BEEN DULLED A BIT.

Brady Fiechter:

B-

QUESTION: CAN AN ENTIRELY NEW TEAM OF PROGRAMMERS TAKE THE INCOMPARABLE WIPEOUT SERIES TO THE NINTENDO 64 AND CONTINUE WITH THE INCREDIBLE SPEEDS, DRIVING BEATS, AND BLISTERING VISUALS? THE ANSWER FOR FANS OF THE SERIES: DON'T COUNT ON IT. AND FOR ANYONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN EXPOSED TO WHAT IS ONE OF THE FINEST RACING SERIES TO DATE, RELAX: YOU'RE ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE A TASTE OF WIPEOUT FOR THE FIRST TIME - NOW ONLY WITH LESS SATISFYING PHYSICS, LEANER MUSIC AND AMBIENCE, AND A DROP IN OVERALL PRECISION.

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"About ten Metal Gear Solid-related books (guidebooks and more) have been published and sold in Japan. However, there is not a single one that matches the excellence of the guidebook by Millennium. Namely, the taste (artistic sense) oozing from all pages is superb. This is the kind of book we have been waiting for!"

"Each page is elaborately and finely laid out. The level of completion as a guidebook is extremely high. It even incorporates the essence and setting details of Alaska. Its composition as pure reading material is wonderful. And most important of all, it is visually very well polished and sophisticated, leaving us in the development team awestricken."

"As for screenshots, we can tell that the editors made sure they got what they really wanted to show. I could feel the deep love of the editors for Metal Gear Solid. Even the forklift and gun cameras in the game are given extensive explanations. This is what a true guidebook should really do - effectively supplement the game to follow up on details that could not be done in the game itself."

"Above all things, I am extremely touched that this game called Metal Gear Solid, created by a group of Japanese people, is very sincerely dealt with as a piece of art."

"I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the staff who have put together this wonderful guidebook."

"Thank you very much."

Hideo Kojima
Creator and Director of Metal Gear Solid

"[a] terrific... and rather thorough Metal Gear Solid strategy guide [with] clever reading and helpful data. This book has it all."

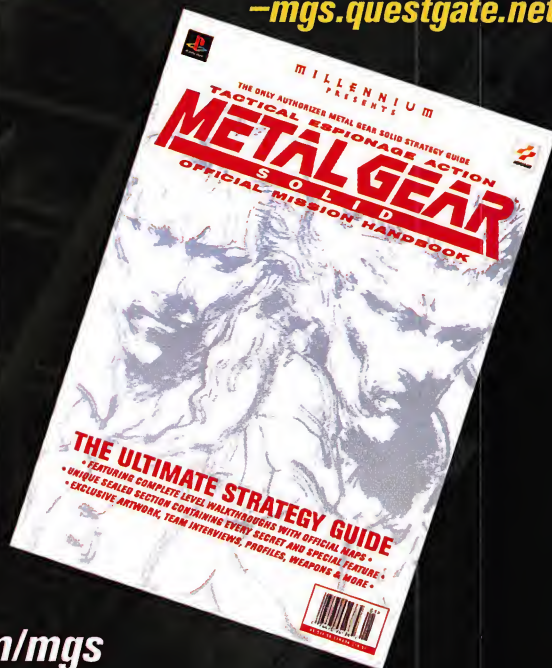
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-metalgear.net

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989 Studios like to boast that *NCAA GameBreaker '99* is the best-playing college football game available on any system. They're right. Leading the charge of its immense appeal, the sophistication and depth of gameplay present in *GameBreaker '99* makes taking control of your favorite team the ultimate in the armchair-quarterback experience. The game knows the finer mechanics that go into each and every play—offense and defense—and offers them to us for smooth, satisfying interaction. To ensure authenticity and the distinctive flavor of college football, *GB '99* augments the gameplay with uncompromising attention to the finer points of the sport, offering loads of features for even greater depth: choose from every Division 1 team and its respective stadium; flip through exhaustive playbooks; compete for the



Heisman and make recruits; and listen to the preeminent Keith Jackson entertainingly call the game.

For all its triumphs, *GB '99* easily breaks free from other college football games with the driving force of its excellent player models. Detailed, fast, and full of animations, the players cement the game as the benchmark for this year's college football titles.

NCAA GAMEBREAKER

developer/publisher: 989 studios available: now



One cannot help but imagine what it would be like if a modern PC game properly emulated the intense challenge of tackling Mother Nature's most severe slopes with a pair of freshly waxed skis. The potential for a fierce gaming experience here is innately high, and considering the incredible strides that PC developers have made this year in 3D technology, we should expect dramatically better results.

That is why Sierra Sports' *Skiing '99* is an utter disappointment. Whether running with 3D acceleration or in software, the 3D engine and lack of polish in the game is currently well below today's standards. *Skiing '99* stars Picabo Street, a '98 Olympic



Gold Medalist, and features a robust lineup of resorts from across the globe that should please any skiing fanatic. The diverse selection of runs serves as an excellent playground for all sorts of maneuvers, from daffys to spread eagles. But, unfortunately, the poor 3D engine fails miserably in supporting the game's feature set, making this one to avoid at all costs. Jeez, just go skiing.

SKIING '99

developer: dynamix publisher: sierra available: now



Following the worldwide success of *World Cup '98* earlier this year, EA have prepared *FIFA '99* for mass consumption. Instead of a limited amount of top-class world teams, however, *FIFA '99* offers over 240 of Europe's finest footy clubs as well as 19 well-known stadiums. The first reviewable *FIFA '99* to hit GR is the N64 version.

World Cup '98 was fairly impressive on the system, providing vast stadium graphics, admirable frame rates, and excellent sound. With *FIFA '99*, though, EA may be stretching the system to its technical limits. Tiny additions such as minor light sourcing and different-sized players may be responsible for the game's chugging frame rate, or it may be the dimensions of the stadiums. Either way, there are moments where half-a-dozen frames drop out of sight, and it's not pleasant viewing for the gamer. Ah... but it would be too easy to judge *FIFA '99* based on these minor graphic deficiencies.

Ultimately, the detailed play mechanics and frenetic action

keep this title alive—especially when played in multiplayer. The control is quite good once you adjust to the effect of frame-rate lag, and the variety of player moves (including skillful dribbling plays) and loads of motion-captured animations give one a sense of the “real thing.” Bottom line: Master the controls and there's a good soccer game to play here. An extensive League or Cup tournament can be a satisfying experience alone or with friends.

But, for casual soccer fans, I can't recommend *FIFA '99* over *World Cup '99*, as the changes/enhancements are less than significant. On the other hand, hard-core fans of the European football scene (in possession of an N64) should take a serious look at *FIFA '99*. If you have all platforms at your disposal, hang on for the PS and PC reviews. These versions tend to be superior, and, respectively, they offer 8- and 20-player simultaneous gaming.



FIFA '99

developer/publisher: electronic arts available: now



Forget that Brett Favre is pasted on the front of the box. The sales of *NFL Quarterback Club '99* will be driven by the outstanding graphics that depict the players with a level of realism that dares any other sports game to match. When the players converge onto the field for the first time, their thick, detailed, high-resolution figures running through an equally impressive stadium immediately feed the desire to uncover everything the game has to offer – which turns out to be a disappointment in the midst of the fantastic graphics.

Part of the gameplay problems existing in *Quarterback Club '99* stem from the ambitious character animations. Drop a beautiful pass just out of reach of a diving defender, tip the receiver back on one foot, and watch him barely extend towards the ball while meeting with the ground – one of many great sequences, yet the wealth of animations too often interfere with the flow and speed of the play. It always looks good, but there is never the satisfying sense of seamless, smooth execution found in today's best-playing football games.

As good as the game looks, there are times when a play unfolds stiffly and mechanically: Hit a running back, and he may stay locked in an awkward animation. There is very little sense of collision involved in any tackle, which, in what is one of the game's most detrimental flaws, creates a pervasive sense of detachment from the action on the field. With the kinetic energy of football taking a back seat to outstanding aesthetics (made even better with the RAM extension pack) the wow factor just isn't enough to enthusiastically pull us through an entire season. *✂*



QUARTERBACK CLUB '99

developer: iguana publisher: acclaim available: fall '98



Well, the *NBA Jam* of old is no more. This time around, Acclaim have opted to go the professional b-ball route by emphasizing realistic NBA rules, 5-on-5 gameplay, and strict mechanics. And although they have thankfully included a Jam mode that eliminates fouls and piles on the mega-dunks, the fact is, *NBA Jam 99* is out to compete with the big boys of the genre this time.

With this in mind, I suppose it's only fair to judge *NBA Jam 99* as a real sim, in which case it doesn't do a bad job at all. The players have been realistically

rendered and the high-res stadium engine looks very good. Also, the control is mostly precise. The now-standard pass calling system is in full effect, and they've included an alley-oop set-up option for show-stopping dunks. Also, the collision is nice and tight in and around the players and basket.

I have a few complaints, however. The CPU AI in Jam mode is seriously cheap. Sure, it's understood that this is *NBA Jam's* balls-out play mode, but with 5 on 5 in 3D, it somehow feels terribly unfair at times. Regardless, NBA fans will enjoy the four-player game. *✂*

NBA JAM '99

developer: iguana publisher: acclaim available: now



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WORLD REPUBLIC

October was a slow month for import releases, but, as you'll see in our Tokyo Game Show coverage, that's about to change. Next month we'll be bringing you a healthy dose of new PlayStation games, along with our first hands-on Dreamcast coverage!

WORLD REPUBLIC REVIEW • developer/publisher **CAPCOM**

MARVEL SUPER HEROES vs. STREET FIGHTER



Astounding 2D Combat For Probably The Last Time...



Even though most people consider the Saturn to be dead, Capcom have proved that the system still has an enormous amount of energy left to perform 2D titles. *MSH vs. SF* is probably the second-best-looking game ever to be released for the system (*Radiant Silvergun* being my favorite, graphically). It is an incredible sight to behold when the game begins, as all of the backdrops, character animations and sounds are identical to those of the original arcade version. 2D has never looked this good before, and thankfully, due to the use of the 4 Meg RAM pack, you don't have to worry about sluggish load times. Gameplay is similar to *X-Men vs. SF*, and with 18 characters (and even some hidden fighters), the tag-team fighting has reached a frenetic all-time high. Crushing supers and combos (aerial and ground) are commonplace and responsive controls are the order of the day. Whilst not being radically different to previous Capcom fighters, it still holds a unique charm and nothing comes close to the feeling of satisfaction as you slap down one of your close, big-mouthed friends. As a final salute to the Saturn, I recommend that you pick up *MSH vs. SF* and enjoy the pinnacle of 2D excellence while waiting for the Dreamcast to emerge. Stunning.



SATURN REVIEW

WORLD REPUBLIC REVIEW 0012.132 676435 048.42

SEGATA SANSHIRO

GAME BY SEGA

Even though Sega's uber-popular comical icon went the way of the Saturn a few weeks ago (see story on page 9), his commercials live forever in this "tribute" game. That is, of course, if you can sit through the mini-challenges to unlock them. Yes! You too can test your coordination by kicking trash into its rightful container. Want to be Santa Sanshiro and deliver presents to all the little kids? Now's your chance! My god, are these games lame! In any case, if you enjoy the character and can get the game for free... **A** If not... **F**



WORLD REPUBLIC REVIEW • developer/publisher **AXELA**

GUYBRAVE 2



It'll take a Brave Guy to play this one all the way through...

I was honestly expecting *Guybrave 2* to be a harmless little mech action game with RPG elements, and it almost is. Using one of four mechs, you navigate corridor-like levels, blasting loads of robotic drones. In between these levels, there are voice-driven cut scenes involving each of the mech pilots. In hyper anime-esque fashion, the main character hits on the cute chick, she screams in protest, the brutish big guy has hidden confidence issues, and the solemn, super-cool guy slips and allows his emotions to show every now and then. Yawn. We've seen it a hundred times before, and as always, I can handle it again. What I can't handle (and the reason why *Guybrave 2* isn't "harmless"), however, is the terrible 3D engine and astoundingly dull levels. It's unbelievable how crap the graphics are. The pop-up is so close, the textures are trash, and the effects are a joke. This is an embarrassment to first generation PS stuff. The levels are awful; too crude for words, too boring to care about. There's a bunch of weapon



upgrades to slap onto the mechs, but I dare anyone to last more than 4 hours powering-up through the worthless levels. It's too bad. The mech design and accompanying artwork is very cool.

WORLD REPUBLIC SAYS: It's funny. I'd rather play a subpar import game than a subpar U.S. game. This one, however, is low. Two CDs worth of voice and budget graphics. **C-**

(A) Awesome in-game anime!
(B) In game shots. The 3D engine is weak, no? (C) And don't forget the gratuitous render (far left).

WORLD REPUBLIC REVIEW • developer/publisher **SME****GANGWAY MONSTERS****Monstrous battles are sure to happen in this latest offering from Sony!**

Hot on the heels of the current *Pocket Monster* "collect-and-battle"-style video games comes *Gangway Monsters* from Sony Music of Japan. The idea of the game is to collect up to 60 different monsters and battle them in circular arenas against other players. You can select up to three different monsters per battle, and by participating in real-time 3D battles, you are able to defeat and collect others. The main difference between *Gangway Monsters* and the other critter battlers is that your creatures get to ride on a special disc vehicle called a Begoma. These machines hover above the ground and have spinning blades, allowing you to pursue and collide with the enemies, in turn building up your power meter, which enables you to attack. The Begomas consist of an engine, a gyro, and rotating ring, all of which can be upgraded with prize money, making the vehicles much more effective in combat. Sounds simple? Well, the controls take a while to come to grips with, but pretty soon you will be speeding around the arenas wasting the baddies! Later in the game, your guys will develop magic attacks, enabling huge damage to be inflicted. There are many different tournaments to be entered (via a world map) and many different prizes to win. You can even spend some of your hard-earned cash at the casino, with the vain hope of swelling your bank balance on the roll of a dice! Compared to *Pokemon*, *GM* is definitely different, and just as much fun in its own right, but it will certainly receive some stiff competition if Sony decide to release it in the U.S. Try it and you may find yourself addicted to those little mutated critters. **C+**

WORLD REP. 0013.132. 676548 048.42
PLAYSTATION REVIEW**BEATMANIA**

GAME BY KONAMI

Tweakin' the major vinyl and tearin' up 'da wax with techno overlords Jam Master 73, DJ Battle and The Dust Fathers (!) is only a small fraction of the fun you can have with *Beat Mania*, as our resident Mixmaster Keith Willia demonstrates (below), using ASCII's very own turntable controller. If you have \$110 to burn and enjoy hitting one of five large piano-style buttons to the increasingly difficult tunes of Japanese-influenced dance musak while blocky visuals flash by, this could be for you! *Parappa* and *Bust a Groove* folks need apply, especially since the *MGS* theme is even in there! Great two-player fun! **B**



WORLD REP. 0013.132. 676689 048.43

PLAYSTATION REVIEW**STRIKERS 1945 II**

GAME BY PSIKYO

In the mood for an intense, old-school overhead shooter that's really short and has simple but appealing graphics? If so, Psikyo has a game for you. *Strikers 1945 II* puts you in an alternate universe 1945 where you get to pilot several circa-WWII propeller craft and take down wave after wave of flying foes and giant mechs. Offering both full screen sideways play and shrunken, vertical scroll modes, *Strikers* is for anyone with a penchant for straightforward, arcade-style overhead shooters. Just don't expect much depth. **C+**

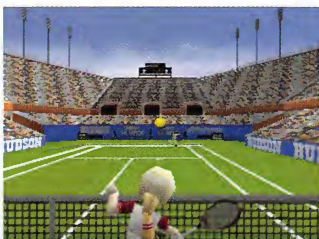


WORLD REPUBLIC SAYS PlayStation owners can now join in on the fun of capturing monsters, battling with friends, and generally having a good time. These little guys are really cool, so check it out if this is your kinda gig. **C+**

WORLD REPUBLIC REVIEW • developer/publisher **HUDSON****LET'S SMASH****Hudson serve up a winner with their first tennis game for the languishing import N64...**

It's been a long time since I've played a tennis game, let alone a good one. In fact, aside from the first couple of PS offerings, the most fun I've had playing video tennis was way back on the NES with a little game aptly named...

Tennis. It is from that games mold that Hudson's *Let's Smash* is derived. So imagine, if you will, the extreme playability of an old-school sprite-based sports game with polygonal graphics and extremely accurate control. In other words, if you're in the market for a good game of tennis with excellent multiplayer capabilities and plenty of bells and whistles, look no further. Short of a license, there's little to complain about among the clay, grass, street, and hard courts of *Let's Smash*. The game includes a create player mode and several types of play including singles, doubles, tournament, and practice. The control is intuitive, the animation and frame rates are smooth, and there are plenty of cameras to choose from in fine-tuning your game. The distinctly Japanese character design is welcome, too. I'll be surprised if someone doesn't pick *Let's Smash* up, tweak the look of the players to mimic the likes of Sampras, Hingis, the Williams sisters and the rest of today's elite, and have at a little free reign, as there are almost no tennis games out to speak of and not a single one on the N64. **C+**



WORLD REPUBLIC SAYS "The first Tennis game for the 64 was a long time coming, but it's great fun!" **B+**

WORLD REPUBLIC INTERVIEW

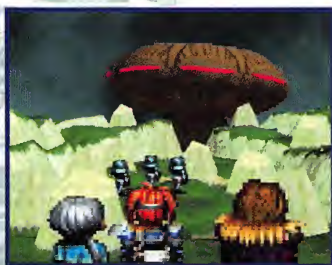
the creators of SHINING FORCE III: the trilogy **CAMELOT**

When Camelot Software Planning said they would be producing three entire Shining Force games in one year, I couldn't believe it. As we now know, they've done it.

What's most important, however, is the concept behind the Shining Force 3 Trilogy: Total Synchronicity. With SF3, Camelot provided gamers with a grand storyline. As opposed to experiencing this plotline from the typical, linear point of view, it was decided that three unique perspectives were required to effectively convey the depth of the story. As a result, three characters from three unique social classes would star in the epic. With each disc, the same story would be chronicled, yet an entirely new dimension could be revealed through the eyes of another main character. Camelot's breakthrough concept wasn't limited to a mere cast change, though. As players made their way through each Scenario quest, every decision and subtle alteration to the world and its characters would be retained in the save file. Carrying the "Complete" save file from one Scenario disc to the next would change the events of the quest, because all actions were essentially occurring at the same time, in the same world. Synchronicity is the ultimate incentive for strategy RPG players.

Shining Force 3 Trilogy has been an incredible event. All three discs will eas-

ily make my top ten of the year. I recently spoke with SF3's producer, director, and lead programmer. They were so happy to hear about Scenario 1's success in the U.S. and the overwhelming interest in Scenario 2 & 3. In response, they have each written a personal letter to all the faithful Shining Force fans in this country. And now I pass on their heartfelt comments to you.

**HIROYUKI TAKAHASHI**

I am Hiroyuki Takahashi and I'm responsible for the game design and story, as producer. I'm glad that you are interested in *Shining Force 3*. We devoted ourselves to compiling the entire *Shining* series into the *Shining Force 3 Trilogy*, so that nothing would be regretted later. As a game designer, I knew I was in for a difficult task from the start, and I wasn't able to rest easy and relax until I had finished writing the scenarios.

In most games, people can guess what the ending will be like while playing, and that reduces the interest in the storyline or the game itself. My task was to create a fascinating and engaging story that would draw the player's attention and maintain excitement until the end of the game. As you know, *Shining Force 3* is a trilogy. If the player knows everything there is to know at the end of *Scenario 1*, he or she isn't going to play the sequel, right? Hence the reason behind the Synchronicity system: we wanted players to truly feel the possibility of RPGs. Recent RPGs are based on the same story scheme, and they seem to be created for players to look at CG movies. There are no longer Japanese RPGs that deliver players the concept of "riddle solving." I don't want to play games just to find an experience based on a scene from the CG. The best aspect in RPGs is that players can create their own destiny, and we wished to evoke this sensation by playing only the game itself.

Shining Force 3 is a game that Camelot created for those who really love games. I am very grateful for your understanding. As long as players like you exist we will continue to challenge ourselves to create fun games.

We thank all those who love the *Shining* series.

Hiroyuki Takahashi
Producer, Camelot

**SHUGO TAKAHASHI**

Shining Force 3 is a game we've created with all-out effort and we're confident that it is the culminating compilation of the 'Force series. Within a year and a half, we had to finish creating the game as a trilogy, which was thought to be impossible in the beginning. However, our attachment to the series and our passion for great games made the creation possible. If players feel the passion we poured into the game as they play it, we'll be grateful. Aside from numerous characters, systems, and battles that make the game more exciting, it is also the first game to adopt the Synchronicity system, which causes different effects depending on the way you play the game.

Alas, it is so very regrettable that the game is available as a trilogy only in Japan. And although the Saturn is not doing well overseas, I am surprised and happy to hear that we have enthusiasts for our games. We will keep creating games that make players happy (as well as our developers!) so please look forward to our future titles, and thank you for your support.

Shugo Takahashi
Director, Camelot





YASUHIRO TAGUCHI

While creating *Shining Force 3*, we, the programmers, have paid very close attention to the following matters:

- (1) Comfortable gameplay environments without making players feel that they are using a CD-ROM;
- (2) Strengthening the polygon performance that is said to be weaker than the other console systems;
- (3) Frequent utilization of the DSP chip, a function that comes with the Saturn but is rarely used.

Regarding (1): Those who played the game should already understand. By using the CD buffer memory efficiently, players can access and move to different scenes as fast as ROM cartridge games provide. There is no noticeable delay when a player moves from the field to battle scenes and vice versa.

Regarding (2): We used Power Animation from Alias Wavefront as a design tool, and by devising our own animation tool we made it possible to have smooth, natural movement on the Saturn. The images are rich. We succeeded in displaying a fully polygonal field map. Usually for field maps, specific sizes of blocks constitute the image. In this game, we were able to place any polygonal shape wherever we wanted them to be in the environment. That's why all the maps are complex yet natural looking.

Regarding (3): By assigning the texture calculations to the DSP, we were able to recreate magic effects realistically. Also, by implementing this system to the field map, manifestations of lighting and water reflections (which are weak points of the Saturn) can be achieved.

There is one more important element in *Shining Force 3*: The game has great dramatic presentation. Not only does it present effects in battle, but it also uses dynamic, precise camera movement. And it's all displayed using real-time polygons. People who are accustomed to seeing CG might be pleasantly surprised by this. These good things are made possible thanks to our programmers.

Speaking of which, we have already started working on our next upcoming title. Unfortunately, I cannot disclose anything regarding this game, but we're planning to include something that will definitely surprise players. Please look forward to it.

Yasuhiro Taguchi
Programmer, Camelot



Here are some examples of the fine CG work Mr. Taguchi refers to in this trilogy. Now we can't wait for the future work he alludes to...

We extend both thanks and congratulations to all at Camelot Software Planning. The *Shining Force 3* Trilogy is a magnificent achievement, and judging by their comments, it's obvious that the game's creators have a true passion for their work. Now let's all cross our fingers and repeat "Shining Force Dreamcast" over and over again. —Mike Griffin

TOKYO GAME SHOW

BY RYAN LOCKHART

ground zero japan makuhari messa convention center

Held in the same location as the Spring Tokyo Game Show, we traveled to the Makuhari Messe Convention Center in Makuhari, Japan, for this year's Fall Tokyo Game Show. For three days, October 9-11, we waded through over 90 exhibitors, crossed three convention halls, and braved the over 150,000 in attendance – and came back with the goods. The next four pages combine the best non-Dreamcast games the show had to offer... Have fun!



Unlike the last time we covered the TGS, we're not splitting up the article by system. Why not? Well, aside from our Dreamcast coverage (see page 30), nearly everything else was PlayStation. Go figure.



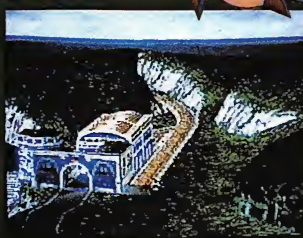
Unlike the Spring Tokyo Game Show before it (see our first issue for coverage), this fall show was packed with exciting software. In other words, it was packed with Dreamcast software. The titles shown for PlayStation and Nintendo 64, with a few major exceptions, weren't of the caliber I was hoping for – and aside from *FFVIII* and *R4*, no other non-Dreamcast games really got my blood pumping. For the full coverage of the Dreamcast titles on display, check out our in-depth coverage on page 30. For those who want an early look at what's going to be hitting Japan (and maybe America) in the upcoming months, read on...



final fantasy viii

cooler than it needs to be

With the exception of Sega's booth, this is where the action was at the TGS. *Final Fantasy VIII* was shown at Square's booth in full force, displayed on a good 50 playable units, with the CG movies broadcast on huge screens on either side of the booth. We finally saw the outside world, which looked even more detailed than in *FFVII*, complete with large structures littered over the landscape. The battles were great, although some of the backgrounds looked a bit low resolution. We'll have more info next issue!



© 1998 Squaresoft

saga frontier 2

a hand-drawn wonder

Now this is my kind of RPG. Fully hand-drawn, beautiful music, and exciting battles. A far cry from the first *Saga Frontier*, the sequel only seems to carry over the battle system and character designer from the first – everything else was totally original. With in-game characters and backgrounds that look like something out of a *Quest* game (I wonder if they helped), *SF2* was one of the best-looking games of the show. See, hand-drawn still works!



© 1998 Squaresoft

chocobo racing

now that's a speedy chicken

Shown only on video, Square/Chun Soft's latest title joins the ranks of *Mario Kart* and *Diddy Kong Racing* – yet another wacky racer is on the way. While I really don't care for this type of game, I will admit *Chocobo* looked pretty good, aside from the size of the characters. The levels were diverse and the cast of racers was huge, but still... you're just racing a chubby chicken around a track.

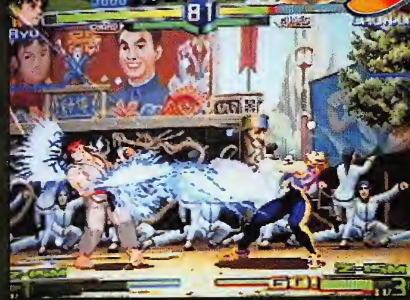


© 1998 Squaresoft

s.f. zero.3

arcade perfect?

Although no Saturn version was announced, *Street Fighter Zero 3* might be the first Capcom home conversion that really doesn't need one. Believe it or not, the PlayStation version on display not only had nearly all the frames you'd find in the arcade, but there was no slowdown to be found. Even better, the character select screen had five silhouetted characters! Five hidden fighters, that's crazy! Sure, Really Evil Ryu and Annoyed Blanka might be in there, but if Capcom spent the time to add in at least one original fighter, they'd be gods...



© 1998 Capcom

cybernetic empire

suction cups anyone?

It's great to see Wolfteam back, and even though their new game is a far cry from what title it emulates, *Cybernetic Empire* is incredibly cool in its own aspects. Trying to improve on the *Metal Gear Solid* stealth feature, *CE* allows you to use suction cups to climb any surface in the game, giving you the perfect way to avoid detection. The control felt a bit off and the graphics were a bit first-generation, but the gameplay looked great.



© 1998 Wolfteam/Telenet

ridge racer type 4

speed... with style

Complete with a live DJ and racing colors everywhere, there was little doubt which game Namco was pushing at this fall's TGS. Now supporting super detailed graphics to match the always-fun arcade experience, *Ridge Racer Type Four* (or as the kids call it, *R4*) impressed all who witnessed it. The in-game graphics are superb, but what really shocked me were the replays,

which actually blew away *Gran Turismo* in terms of lighting and reflections effects. I tried out the new force feedback Namco controller (the JogCon) as well, which really heightened the whole experience.

Namco also had the new version of *Tales of Phantasia* (great cinemas!) and *Star Ixion* on video, making their booth one of the best of the show.



© 1998 Namco

mystic ark 2

a long-awaited sequel...



One of the few tragedies American gamers suffered during the 16-bit days was missing *Mystic Ark*, Produce's epic sequel to *7th Saga*, complete with an involving quest and incredible music by uber-composer Mint. Well, Produce and Mint are back, but the package they're delivering is slightly different than before. Now a 3D RPG, *MA2* almost resembles a first-generation PS title rather than what I would expect from this team. But then again, if the gameplay and music are anything like the first, count me in...

© 1998 Enix/Produce/Mint

mermanoid

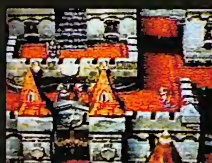
be sure to hold your breath

One of the few surprises of the show, *Mermanoid* is claiming to be the first "real" underwater RPG. Unlike *b.l.u.e.*, which had role-playing elements fused in an adventure game, *Mermanoid* delivers the whole RPG turkey – including turn-based battles, dungeon exploration, and character development, all underwater. The graphics were a bit chunky, but the pure ambition of the title makes it one to look forward to.



dragon quest vii

coming sometime in 1999

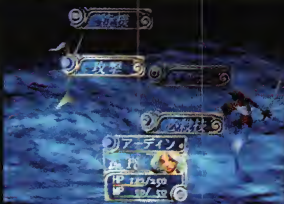


Dragon Quest VII, despite all the hype, was strangely enough shown only on a single video screen, indicating this game is far from completion.

Both of the areas displayed – the main castle and town – had been shown before. I saw one nice "world spinning" effect, but that was it...



© 1998 Enix



© 1998 Xing

SONY GAMES

LOOK! SONY RPGS!

Legaia



poporoque



Well, this is cool. Unlike last year's presentation, Sony's booth actually had two RPGs on display. Sure, they were only on a tiny video screen, and the rest of the million screens had *Crash 3* and a new *I.Q.* game, but still... Both of these games should be out by the time you read this, and there's a good chance we'll see *Legaia* in America in the near future.

© 1998 SCE

EVANGELION

beat down shinji

The only Nintendo 64 title that really caught my eye was yet another *Evangeline* game. Of course, unlike the trillion "cheap" titles we've seen with the Eva name plastered on it in the past, this latest attempt is a fighting title. But, believe it or not, it looked really good. The graphics were spot on, and the animation seemed to be taken straight from the TV show. It wasn't playable, though, so I can't comment on the control.



© 1998 Bandai/Gainax

HARD EDGE

anime + resident evil

Despite incredible background quality and well produced CG, *Hard Edge* was plagued with horrible control. This *Resident Evil*-ish action title did have potential, though, and it's supposedly coming out in America. If so, I just hope they'll tweak the game so that you'll actually be able to turn while walking...



© 1998 Sunsoft

THOUSAND ARMS

could be a classic

Ascii and Red's upcoming RPG impressed me quite a bit more than I thought it would. Still sporting scrunchy character sprites, the background graphics and animation/CG movies were very high quality and gave great indication of what this title could turn out to be... An American release is almost certain.



© 1998 Ascii/Red

PORTABLE MANIA

you can't get away...

This Tokyo Game Show represented not only the future of home gaming with the Dreamcast, but also gave us an inside look at what we might be wasting our time with on the road - portable systems. SNK showed off both the normal and color (!) versions of their NeoGeo Pocket, Bandai displayed their very cool looking *Wonder Swan* (check out our news section for more info), Sony presented their very small (and low resolution) PlayStation Pocket, and Sega had their uber-memory card, the VMS.



© 1998 SNK

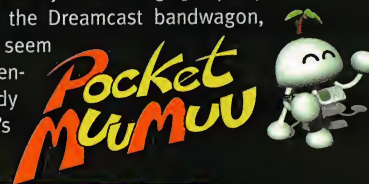


© 1998 Bandai

WRAP UP

another show already over

Well, that's it. Another TGS is over, perhaps the last one dominated by 32-bit titles. Next spring, Sony are rumored to be debuting their 128-bit+ machine, and by then enough 3rd-party developers will be jumping on the Dreamcast bandwagon, making the PlayStation selection seem poor by comparison. Another generation in video games is already coming to an end, but the future's going to be damn exciting... ☺



© 1998 Sony

anime republic

JAN 99 ANIME REPUBLIC



REVOLUTIONARY GIRL UTENA: THE LEGENDARY SPICE

Original Japanese Release:
B-Papas/Chiho Saito/TV
Tokyo/Shonenn linkai
Released in America by:
Software Sculptors
Dubbed in English
Action/Adventure

REVIEW BY DAVE HALVERSON

STORIES: A boy genius from the student council is entranced by Anthy's piano playing and will stop at nothing to win her from Utena, which leads to a duel atop the now-familiar spiral tower. Freaky as ever and surreal to the core. Snippets of pure lunacy – lovely stuff. Up next, does the student council president want his sister dead? She's certainly annoying enough... And, finally, to wrap up another 75 minutes of strangeness, it takes a miracle for Utena to defeat Jury's challenge – truly a woman scorn.

CHARACTER DESIGN: Sleek, tall characters and surreal marionettes. Magnificently huge, glossy eyes. Haunting at times. Wonderful.

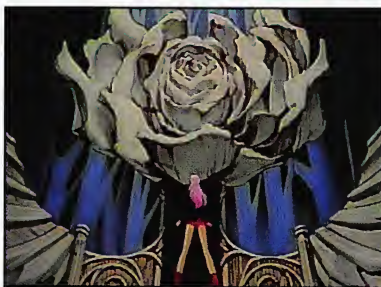
ANIMATION: Good at times, but mostly Japanese TV quality. Moments of seamlessness creep in every now and then. The opening and pre-duel animation is stunning.

SOUNDTRACK: An excellent classical ensemble. Great music to lose your mind to.

FIGHT SCENES: Freaky. Three geeks (and almost one kangaroo) go down to a child in episode two. It's weird – really weird. The fights in *Utena* are just strange. Episode three's final duel is choreographed brilliantly.

HIGHLIGHT: The writing. This series is unique in ways I cannot explain.

FINAL ANALYSIS: If you've got an open mind and lean towards the surreal, *Revolutionary Girl Utena* is an absolute recommended purchase, even if you don't watch anime. ★★★★★



DARKSTALKERS' REVENGE VOLUME 3

Original Japanese Release:
Pioneer
Released in America by:
Viz Video
Length: 45 minutes
Dubbed in English
Adventure series based
on the Capcom video game

REVIEW BY BRYN WILLIAMS

STORY: Pyron's forces (the Huitzil) are now beginning to slowly move over the planet, annihilating all forms of human life in an attempt to cleanse the world. The Earth is in perpetual twilight and even the Darkstalkers are starting to feel the strain of the impending doom. Hsien-Ko and Mai-Lin dwell on the death of their mother, and vow to bring the mighty Pyron to justice, whilst Donovan and Anita continue their quest for emotional

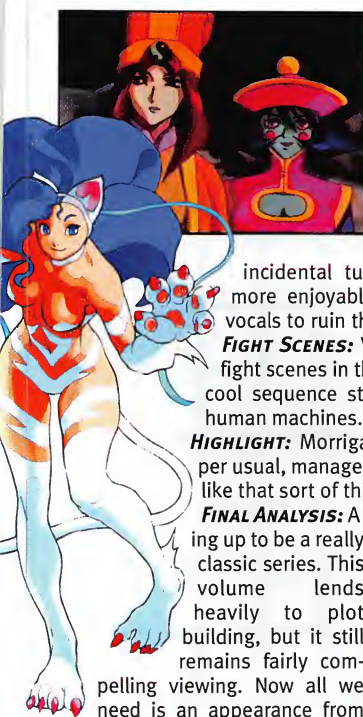
reconciliation as well as a way to discover inner peace. Morrigan and Demitri argue in the Dark Realm whilst the evil forces continue to destroy the Earth and a rather disgruntled Felicia decides to help the humans in their struggle, with some unexpected help from a new face in town.

CHARACTER DESIGN: Gorgeous character designs are apparent in all of the *Darkstalker* videos, and this volume is no exception. The use of colors and desirous physical appearances are very much evident.

ANIMATION: Fairly high standards of animation are implemented, but probably not as high as those found in *Escaflowne*. Nice, nonetheless.

DUBBING (IF APPLICABLE): The American voiceovers are a little bit strained at times, and it's hard to imagine some of the characters using the "young person's" vernacular.

SOUNDTRACK: Atmospheric music and

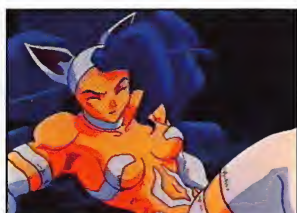


incidental tunes make the whole experience more enjoyable. Thankfully, there are no nasty vocals to ruin the feel.

FIGHT SCENES: Very little in the way of noticeable fight scenes in this particular volume, but there is a cool sequence starring the Huitzil and a bunch of human machines.

HIGHLIGHT: Morrigan takes a midnight swim and, as per usual, manages to be extremely erotic. Well, if you like that sort of thing, that is!

FINAL ANALYSIS: A good, solid episode of what's shaping up to be a really classic series. This volume lends heavily to plot building, but it still remains fairly compelling viewing. Now all we need is an appearance from Anakaris and Victor to make the action really kick in. ★★★★★



KEY THE METAL IDOL

Original Japanese

Release: Hiroaki

Sato/Pony

Canyon/Fuji

TV/FCC/Studio

Pierrot

Released in America

by: VIZ Video

Dubbed in English
Science Fiction/Drama

REVIEW BY DAVE HALVERSON

STORY: The eighth and final *Key the Metal Idol* bids farewell to a great series in befitting style. In this final episode, we find Key on the brink of realizing her dream of becoming human, while that realization, and the lives of everyone around her, hang in the balance. Key's found her 30,000 friends... Now, will they live to fulfill her dream, or die as a result of it? Splendid in its complexity, *Key* is worth watching over back to back now that the entire series is available. Episode 8 is dialogue heavy but wholly significant. High drama.

CHARACTER DESIGN: The Ally McBeal of the anime world, Key



is a tiny, extremely thin heroin. Part of me wishes she were a tad more voluptuous but her waif appearance actually makes her story all the more dramatic. The human characters are realistic looking, very well drawn, and the appearance of the non-organic entities is excellent.

ANIMATION: Fair to good. Many still or slightly animated scenes, atoned for by fantastic moments of fluidity.

SOUNDTRACK: Fitting throughout, mood inducing. First rate.

FIGHT SCENES: Very good, usually highly animated. Very violent.

HIGHLIGHT: All of the psychological aspects of this extremely dramatic finale.

FINAL ANALYSIS: One of the best anime series in recent years. Human drama, action, psychological undertones, deep sci-fi themes and a complex story that builds to a fitting and spectacular climax. Recommended. ★★★★★



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BASTARD!! VENOM (TWO EPISODES)

Original Japanese release: 1992 Kazushi Hagiwara/Shueisha
Released in America by: Pioneer
Length: 60 minutes
Dubbed in English
Action

REVIEW BY MIKE GRIFFIN

STORY: The meanest, most vindictive and powerful bastard of them all, Dark Schneider, is back to cause havoc and spread misery! I love this guy! This time, Schneider and old pal Ninja Master Gara stage a complex false rescue, complete with major flashbacks to their first meeting. Episode two has Schneider messing around with a vampire king as Arshes Nei threatens the countryside.

CHARACTER DESIGN: Dark Schneider is a brilliant, conniving warlock. Gara is equally cool, and almost as nasty. The only pure soul, it would seem, is Yoko, and her design screams just that. Very appealing characters overall.

ANIMATION: *Bastard!!*'s animation is rough around the edges but very, very effective. Dark Schneider's spells are usually spectacular and most scenes are fast paced and completely animated.

DUBBING: For once, you're actually better off with the dubbed version of an anime. *Bastard!!* has remarkable voice acting. Notables include the man himself, Schneider, and Di Amon, the bold Vampire King.

MUSIC: Excellent symphonic score. Pioneer has the soundtrack in stores now, and I highly recommend it. This is not your typical ho-hum anime music.

FIGHT SCENES: Although the witty dialogue often steals the show, *Bastard!!*'s fight scenes are wild and bloody. Everyone's a powerhouse



in this world, so the enchanted swords are slashing while the atomic sorcery melts anything that stands in its way.

HIGHLIGHT: I'd have to say the biggest highlight is the tongue-in-cheek dialogue. Hyper-violent battles are in full effect while two combatants taunt each other mercilessly with truly amusing banter.

FINAL ANALYSIS: *Bastard!!* is a unique take on action anime. The fantasy setting is appealing right away, and the characters are very memorable, thanks to an intelligent script. It's a little confusing at times, but that's part of its cool, thought-provoking madness. Check out the whole series ASAP. ★★★★★



PING PONG CLUB: LOVE AND COMEDY (DIE! DIE! DIE!)

Original Japanese Release: Kitty Film-Tokyo Broadcasting
Released in America by: Software Sculptors
Length: 120 minutes
Subtitled in English
Mature comedy series

REVIEW BY BRYN WILLIAMS

STORY: Continuing with the adventures of the most depraved high school ping pong club ever, this second volume sees the lads getting into even more outrageous situations than before. Spread out over four separate episodes, we get to see the team captain, Takeda, become possessed by a sexy spirit, whilst the other members of the team try to come to terms with taking a hot bath with a bunch of young, nubile girls! Then, the boys are forced to play a tournament against a group of middle-aged women. Foul play and devious tactics backfire in ugly faces of the club, and lead to some completely gross sequences. Excellent! Now the day has come for the championship cup, and the boys know that there is a bigger prize at stake than some stupid cup or medal. It is, of course, the one-year "Love Ticket" on offer from their chief of moral, the extremely cute and experienced Kyoko.

CHARACTER DESIGN: *Ping Pong Club* has a very distinctive look about it, mainly in the form of the characters' appearances. They actually look more Asian than the usual designs found in most anime. The boys are very likable indeed!

ANIMATION: Average animation quality, but you don't even notice this because you are laughing so hard!

DUBBING (IF APPLICABLE): N/A

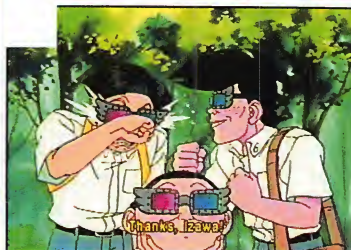
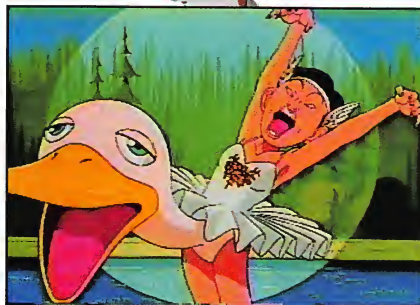
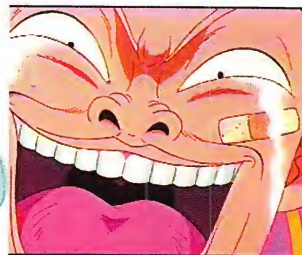
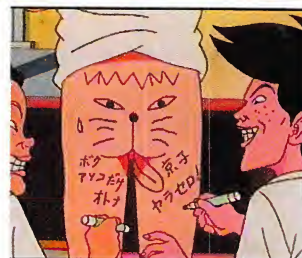
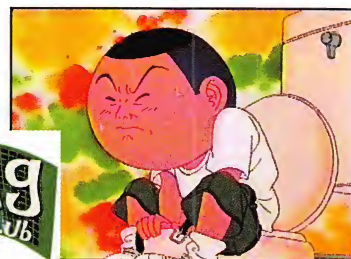
SOUNDTRACK: Catchy Japanese lyrics and amusing dance routine from the cast. Many small Super Deformed cut-scenes for wacky effect!

FIGHT SCENES: Slapstick antics never really descend into hard violence. It's not that kind of anime! Actually, it's a nice change not to be showered with blood and lower intestines.

HIGHLIGHT: When a 65-year-old woman pulls out her sagging knockers and uses them as telephone in order to distract the guys from their game! Mr. Tortoise!

FINAL ANALYSIS: It is really this simple. This is the Japanese equivalent of *Beavis and Butt-Head*. Only this

stuff is actually more fun! You must get it, but be warned, because some of the content is a little bit gross! ★★★★★



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PRESENTS**

TOP FIVE ANIME

GAMERS' REPUBLIC EDITORS' TOP FIVE

D. Halverson

1. Escaflowne - Anime Village
2. Saber Marionette J - AV.com
3. RG Utena - Software Sculptors
4. Bastard - Pioneer
5. Golgo 13: Queen Bee-Urban Vision



1. Evangelion (series)
ADV Films
2. DBZ (series)
Pioneer
3. Ghost in the Shell
Manga
4. Akira
Streamline
5. Macross Plus
Manga

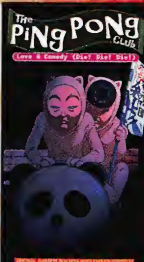


TOP FIVE ANIME CONTEST!

This Month's Winners:

B. Williams

1. Ping Pong Club Vol.2 - Soft. Sculpt.
2. Escaflowne - Anime Village
3. My Neighbor Totoro - Fox
4. Darkstalkers Vol. 3 - VIZ
5. Urotsukidoji - Anime 18



1 Jonathan Hunt
Ontario, Canada

3 Vincent Clarke
Bronx, NJ

2 Mary Ann Soto
Boyton Beach, FL

Congratulations to this month's winners!

To enter the ADV/Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime Contest, simply send us a list of your favorite five anime, new or old. Make sure to include your name, address and age, and send it to: **Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361.** First prize is Shinji's EVA-01 (which stands over 20 inches tall) and *Evangelion 1* through *13*!! Second Prize: Any two ADV releases and an ADV T-Shirt. Third Prize: Any 1 ADV release. All three winners receive a GR subscription. For your free ADV catalog (and this is one cool catalog) write to: **AD Vision, 5750 Blintiff #217, Houston, TX 77036.**

No purchase necessary, void where prohibited, not responsible for lost or damaged postage, so speak up and tell me right now! d'ya hear? Do it now...Boy 12 please...

M. Griffin

1. Bastard Venom - Pioneer
2. Ping Pong Club V. 2 - Soft. Sculpt.
3. Dirty Pair Flash M2 - ADV
4. Robot Carnival - Streamline
5. Grave of the Fireflies - CPM



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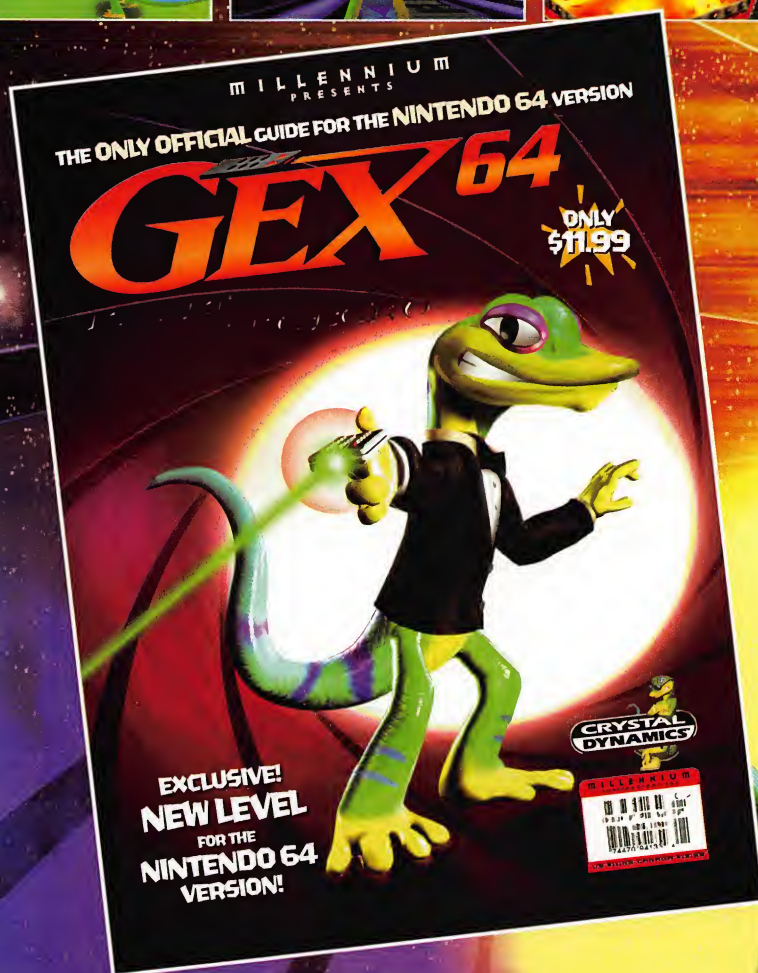
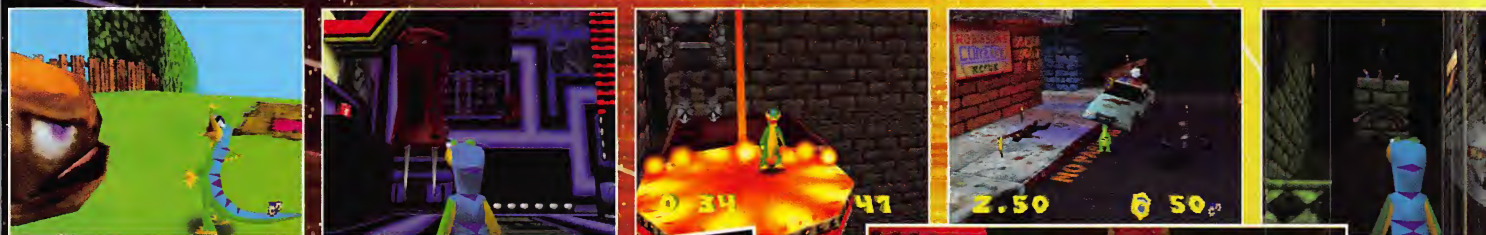


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DAVE REES' CRASH 3: gem strategies

CRASH 3 BRINGS BACK THE SAME CRYSTALS AND GEMS FROM CRASH 2, BUT ADDS A NEW INGREDIENT TO THE RECIPE: THE RELIC. EACH ZONE HAS A "BEST TIME" THAT MUST BE BEAT TO EARN A RELIC FOR THAT AREA. WHILE RELICS ARE RELATIVELY EASY TO OBTAIN, THE LATER AREAS OFTEN REQUIRE THE USE OF THE SPECIAL MOVES, SUCH AS THE RUNNING ABILITY, THAT YOU EARN WITH EACH DEFEATED BOSS. ACQUIRING ALL OF THE GEMS, HOWEVER, IS AS TOUGH AS EVER. BUT WITH THIS GUIDE, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM!

WARP ROOM 1

Level 1: Toad Village

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 2: Under Pressure

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 3: Orient Express

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 4: Bone Yard

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Extra Silver Gem: Ride the red gem to another path.



Level 5: Makin Waves

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

WARP ROOM 2

Level 6: Gee Whiz

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 7: Hang 'em High

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Yellow Gem: You can see the yellow gem in the distance when you traverse the level normally, but you can't reach it until you have opened the hidden warp room and have obtained at least 10 relics, which enables level 27.



Level 8: Hoq Ride

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 9: Tomb Time

Silver Gem: All crates can be obtained only after you own the purple gem, which will open the door with the huge purple gem on it.

Extra Silver Gem: Through the purple gem door passage is another silver gem.



Level 10: Midnight Run

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

WARP ROOM 3

Level 11: Dino Might

Silver Gem: All Crates can only be obtained after riding the yellow gem and breaking all of the crates along the passage.

Extra Silver Gem: The yellow gem path contains a silver gem.



Level 12: Deep Trouble

Silver Gem: Breaking all the crates will require backtracking, as a portion of the underwater cave is blocked. Hitting a trigger ("I") crate at the end of the normal path will enable a crate that will trigger an explosion and allow safe passage.



Red Gem: An added bonus! Waiting at the end of the alternate path is a red gem.

Level 13: High Time

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Purple Gem: Reach the secret skull platform and ride it to an alternate stretch that will lead you to the purple gem!



Level 14: Road Crash

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 15: Double Header

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

WARP ROOM 4

Level 16: Spunxinator

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Extra Silver Gem: Ride the blue gem to a hidden tomb!



Level 17: Byebye Blimps

Crystal: Down all the blimps!

Silver Gem: Shoot all crates before you bust the last blimp!

Level 18: Tell No Tales

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 19: Future Frenzy

Silver Gem: To obtain all the crates, you must enter the level through the hidden warp area (level 29). This will return you to the normal path, which must be traveled in reverse, then forward again to break the remaining crates.



Extra Silver Gem: The hidden warp passage also contains an extra silver gem!

Level 20: Tomb Wader

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Blue Gem: Ride the skull platform and journey through a short but tough pathway to the blue gem, and an alternate exit.



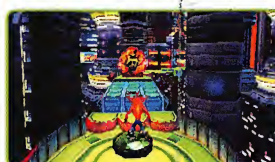
WARP ROOM 5

Level 21: Gone Tomorrow

Silver Gem: Breaking all the crates is very tricky. There are two areas that must be carefully avoided to break every crate (see shots), and some backtracking is required.



Extra Silver Gem: Ride the green gem to an alternate cityscape.



Level 22: Orange Asphalt

Crystal: First place race

Silver Gem: Break All Crates to complete the course

Level 23: Flaming Passion

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Green Gem: The skull platform will take you to a short set of rooftops that lead to the green gem!



Level 24: Mad Bombers

Silver Gem: Shoot all Crates and then down all Red Barons.

Level 25: Aug Lite

Extra Silver Gem: Ride the green, purple, yellow, and red gems to reach the extra silver gem.



After defeating the first five areas, you can take a ride to the hidden warp room by stepping on the nub at the center of the time machine.



HIDDEN WARP ROOM

Level 26: Jet Ski Volcano Level

(Opens when five relics are obtained)

Silver Gem: On the beaten path

Extra Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 27: Extension of Hang 'em High

(Opens when 10 relics are obtained)

Access to yellow gem in Hang 'em High (level 7).

Level 28: Night Motorcycle Race vs. UFOs

(Opens when 15 relics are obtained)

Silver Gem: First place

Silver Gem: Break All Crates

Level 29: Extension of Future Frenzy

(Opens when 20 relics are obtained)

Extra Silver Gem: Level 29 grants access to an alternate path with an extra silver gem and the remaining crates in the Future Frenzy stage (level 19).

Level 30: Flying through Hoops

(Opens when 25 relics are obtained)

Silver Gem: First place through all hoops

Extra Silver Gem: Break all Crates without missing any of the hoops.

codeX republica

STAR EDITOR MIKE GRIFFIN DISCOVERED SOME CODES FOR ACTIVISION'S APOCALYPSE, ENSURING THAT THE GAME WILL BE RUINED FOR EVERYONE.



WRESTLE AS CURT HENNING

WIN ALL NINE U.S. HEAVYWEIGHT COMPETITION ROUNDS.

WRESTLE AS KIDMAN

WIN THE CRUISERWEIGHT BELT.

WRESTLE AS ROWDY RODDY PIPER

WIN THE WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT BELT.

WRESTLE AS KANYON AND MORTIS

WIN THE TV TITLE TO SELECT KANYON IN THE WCW. TO PLAY AS MORTIS, HAVE PLAYER ONE SELECT KANYON, THEN HAVE PLAYER TWO ALSO SELECT KANYON.

WRESTLE AS MENG AND BARBARIAN

WIN THE TAG TEAM BELTS.

WRESTLE AS MANAGERS

SELECT ONE-ON-ONE EXHIBITION MODE AND CHOOSE WRESTLERS THAT HAVE MANAGERS. BEGIN THE MATCH, THEN PRESS Z ON CONTROLLERS THREE AND FOUR.

WRESTLE AS THQ MAN

HIGHLIGHT AKI MAN ON THE CHARACTER SELECTION SCREEN AND PRESS C-DOWN.

WRESTLE AS THE WARRIOR

WIN ALL THE TITLES WITH KIDMAN. THEN, PRESS C-UP, DOWN, C-DOWN, UP, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT AT THE TITLE SCREEN. A NEW "WCW 5" SECTION WITH SANDMAN, DISCIPLE, AND HORACE MAY NOW BE ACCESSED.

TV TITLE MODE

WIN THE CRUISERWEIGHT BELT.

duke nukum: time to kill

LEVEL SELECT

PAUSE GAME PLAY AND PRESS DOWN X9, UP, THEN EXIT THE CURRENT GAME. SELECT THE "TIME TO KILL" OPTION AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MAIN MENU, PRESS LEFT OR RIGHT TO SELECT A LEVEL AND PRESS X TO BEGIN GAME PLAY.

INVINCIBILITY

PAUSE GAME PLAY AND PRESS L2, R1, L1, R2, UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, SELECT X2.

INVISIBILITY

PAUSE GAME PLAY AND PRESS L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1.

UNLIMITED AMMUNITION

PAUSE GAME AND PRESS LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, SELECT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, SELECT.

ALL WEAPONS

PAUSE GAME AND PRESS L1, L2, UP, L1, L2, DOWN, R1, RIGHT, R2, LEFT.

ALL ITEMS

PAUSE GAME AND PRESS R1 X5, L2 X5.

ALL KEYS

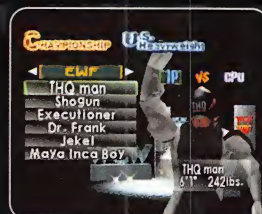
PAUSE GAME AND PRESS UP, RIGHT, UP, LEFT, DOWN, UP, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, DOWN.

EXTRA DAMAGE

PAUSE GAME AND PRESS L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.

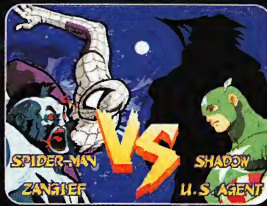
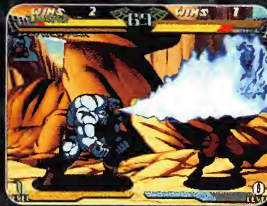
BIG HEAD DUKE

PAUSE GAME AND PRESS R1 X9, UP.



WCW nWo revenge

m.s.h vs. s.p.



FIGHT AS ARMORED SPIDER-MAN
HIGHLIGHT SPIDER-MAN, HOLD START, AND PRESS ANY PUNCH OR KICK BUTTON.

FIGHT AS U.S. AGENT
HIGHLIGHT VEGA (M. BISON), HOLD START, AND PRESS ANY PUNCH OR KICK BUTTON.

FIGHT AS MEGA ZANGIEF
HIGHLIGHT BLACKHEART, HOLD START, AND PRESS ANY PUNCH OR KICK BUTTON.

FIGHT AS MEPHISTO
HIGHLIGHT OMEGA RED, HOLD START, AND PRESS ANY PUNCH OR KICK BUTTON. MEPHISTO'S COLOR WILL BE DIFFERENT DEPENDING ON WHETHER PUNCH OR KICK WAS PRESSED.

FIGHT AS MEGA SAKURA
HIGHLIGHT HULK, HOLD START, AND PRESS ANY PUNCH OR KICK BUTTON.

FIGHT AS GREY HULK
ENABLE THE "FIGHT AS MEGA SAKURA" CODE AND PICK HULK AS HER PARTNER.

FIGHT AGAINST MECH-GOUKI
SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE ARCADE AND SURVIVAL MODE ONCE. AFTER COMPLETING HIGH LIGHT SURVIVAL MODE, PRESS L OR R. THE PHRASE "MECH-GOUKI NOW!!" WILL APPEAR BEFORE THE MATCH BEGINS.



apocalypse

THESE CODES ARE SURE TO GET YOU THROUGH THIS *ONE* RIP-OFF IN NO TIME AT ALL, BROUGHT TO YOU BY GRIFF'S INSANE CODE EXPERIMENTATION:

SKIP TO ANY CHECKPOINT

PAUSE THE GAME, HOLD L1, AND TAP TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X. NOW YOU CAN SKIP AHEAD OR BACKWARDS TO ANY CHECKPOINT WITHIN A LEVEL.

INFINITE LIVES

PAUSE THE GAME, HOLD L1, AND TAP TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X, SQUARE. LOOK FOR THE "INF" IN THE TOP LEFT CORNER OF THE SCREEN AND IT'S OVER FOR GAME OVER, YEEEAH!

PLAYSTATION

the unholy war

BONUS MAPS

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE GAME UNDER NORMAL DIFFICULTY LEVEL AS THE ARCANES TO UNLOCK THE MAZE. SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE GAME UNDER NORMAL DIFFICULTY LEVEL AS THE TEKNOS TO UNLOCK THE MENHIR CIRCLE.

BETA RAZOR

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE GAME UNDER THE HARD DIFFICULTY LEVEL WITH THE TEKNOS. BETA RAZOR MAY NOW BE SELECTED UNDER MAYHEM MODE.

CHEETAH CAR
ENTER RUNNER AS A PASSWORD.

COBRA CAR
ENTER RATTLE AS A PASSWORD.

PANTHER CAR
ENTER MYSTER AS A PASSWORD.

ALL CARS
ENTER ALLVID AS A PASSWORD.

SCORPION CAR
ENTER DESERT AS A PASSWORD.

MASTER MODUS
ENTER XPERTS AS A PASSWORD.



scars

SONIC UNDERGROUND

DIC ENTERTAINMENT

BROADCAST TV • APRIL '99



The blue prickly one might be causing a whirl on the Dreamcast in December, but he's also making a reappearance on TV in the return of *Sonic Underground*, due to hit your screens April 1999. *Sonic Underground* is based on Sega's original Sonic, although the TV version is considerably plumper than its gaming counterpart – well, they say TV adds 10 pounds. *Family Matters* star Jaleel White (Steve Urkel) has been signed to provide voices for the three leads. White voiced the previous two series from the early 1990's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog*, but this time he will add Sonic's long-lost twin brother and sister, Manic and Sonia. Each episode will also feature a new song. *Underground* is actually a prequel to the original series, in which Sonic and pals must free their enslaved home planet Mobius from the grip of evil Robotnik and his Swatbots, and return power to the hedgehogs' mother, Queen Aleena. And just to make things more confusing, Sega is planning a game based on the *Sonic Underground* TV series. So let's get this straight: A TV series based on a video game then gets made into a video game based on the TV series... Yeah, that's right!



series. So let's get this straight: A TV series based on a video game then gets made into a video game based on the TV series... Yeah, that's right!



ABE'S EXODUS

Unrated • Oddworld Inhabitants/GT Interactive

We all know movies and games are moving closer together, but how about the actual cinematics from a game being made into a movie? Well, that's what's happening at Oddworld Inhabitants. The super-talented team has entered a film of the game cinematics for an Academy qualification, making this a first for the Oscars. The short takes place on Oddworld and follows the adventures of Abe, who's trying to get the SoulStorm Brewery closed down. Why a brewery, you ask? Well, the owners are using his ancestor's bones for use in their brews (mmm... nice) and enslaving his people. Abe isn't your typical hero, but that doesn't seem to bother him, as he attempts to save his race from extinction. The story may seem a bit far-out, but the animation is superb. Lorne Lanning, creative director and co-founder of Oddworld Inhabitants, says: "This is the latest development in the crossing of video game technology and content into other entertainment media. We utilize a movie production model in developing our games – to include scripts, storyboards, sketches, paintings and character sculptures – and have created a 'Digital Backlot,' essentially a library of high-resolution assets that is easily adapted for feature films." We were lucky enough to see the movie, and we think it stands a pretty good chance, and should open the door for many more gaming companies to enter in the future.



FINAL FANTASY: the movie

Not Yet Rated • Square/Columbia Pictures
Due for release 2001

Hot news just in! Tokyo-based Square Co. Ltd. has joined with movie-giants Columbia Pictures to produce *Final Fantasy: The Movie*, due for release in 2001. Square are breaking new ground with the first – wait for it! – computer generated, animated motion picture with photo-realistic human characters! Well, it certainly sounds very impressive. It will be produced in Hawaii and directed by Hironobu Sakaguchi, who just so happens to be the president of Square USA. The story, a fantasy about life and death set on Earth in 2065, is said to be inspired by the game. The makers say it will be the first movie ever to simulate human movements and emotions through computer graphics that are more realistic than anything currently available. It's a realization of a dream for Sakaguchi, who states, "With this film I want to create entertainment that touches the imagination of new generations by setting the viewer on an exciting voyage of personal discovery." Academy nominee Al Reinert, who worked on *Apollo 13*, is writing the screenplay. Well, we all know Square produce some phenomenal games, especially the *Final Fantasy* series, and something tells me that they'll probably do the same with the movie. It's a shame we have to wait almost two years, but it'll more than likely be worth it.

CUTTING ROOM FLOOR!

Want to know if there's anything at the movies worth leaving your PC or console for in the next year? Well, here's just a small selection (all tentative, of course) of what the movie makers have planned.

Movies from PC and video games aren't that unusual anymore, but the same director working on both? Well, the man behind the games, Chris Roberts, will be trying his hand at the bigger screen with the release of the *Wing Commander* movie. Blair and Co. join an interstellar war to crush the Kilrathi, who are intent on destroying the universe. ● Another video game character to make it big is Duke Nukem; very little info on this one at the moment, except that Duke has to save the world from an alien race... not using negotiating skills, I'm sure! ● Fans of the comic book *Virus* will also be glad to hear that the movie should finally be released in the first quarter of 1999, after being delayed at least once. It will star Jamie Lee Curtis, William Baldwin and Donald Sutherland. ● Of course, 1999 is the year of release for the first *Star Wars* movie – *Star Wars: Episode 1 The Phantom Menace*, starring Samuel Jackson and Liam Neeson as Jedi Master and Knight and Ewan McGregor as Obiwan Kenobi. ● Lined up to your skin, as *Predator 3* is also lined up for a '99 release. ● Staying with sequels, *Mortal Kombat 3* will also be released this year – let's hope it's more like the first than the second (which was verging on the tragic). Some baddie from the Nether realm "Quan Chi" has released Shinno (Rayden's wayward dad) and now he has the power to rule all existence forever... Hmm, time for the MK team to kick his butt off the face of the Earth once and for all.

We'll have more '99 releases next issue, followed by year 2000.



STAR TREK INSURRECTION

And, finally, *Star Trek* doesn't lose any steam on the gaming front, as Activision announced a 10-year agreement with Viacom to develop and publish games based on the *Star Trek* properties. *Star Trek Insurrection*, the game, is slated for a late '99 release.



WING COMMANDER



MORTAL KOMBAT 3

Cinematrix

By Angela Harrod



PLAYSTATION

Title	Release	Price	Title	Release	Price	Title	Release	Price	Title	Release	Price
SCII Aftershock Wheel	10/98	\$49.99	Diablo	03/98	\$34.99	Kartia	08/98	\$44.99	Rival Schools	10/98	\$42.99
SCII Sphere 360	10/98	\$42.99	Dolphin's Dream	11/98	\$44.99	Kawasaki Motocross	03/99	\$39.99	Road Rash 3D	06/98	\$42.99
Alien Resurrection	01/99	\$44.99	Dragon Warrior	12/98	\$46.99	Kensel Sacred Fist	11/98	\$44.99	Rogue Trip	10/98	\$44.99
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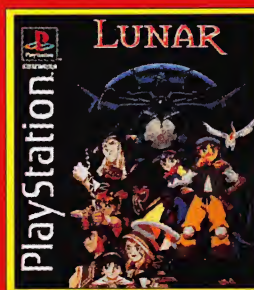
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Release 12/98

4715

Every month I buy almost a dozen new CDs, most of which fall under the annoying modern cliché of "electronica." The new school of drum & bass has become hard-step jungle, techno has become hard techno (for the most part), and house continues to fill dance floors in Europe. Ambient, as a genre, has been reduced to a handful of incredible artists (i.e., Bill Laswell and Global Communication), and breakbeat continues to shine, thanks to innovators like Fat Boy Slim, Monkey Mafia, and The Chemical Brothers. At the core of this musical phenomenon you'll find The Orb. If you've somehow missed their fantastic previous efforts, you owe it to yourself to check out the double CD, *U.F.OFF, The Best of The Orb*. All time classics like "A Huge Evergrowing Pulsating Brain That Rules From The Centre Of The Ultraworld," "Blue Room," "Little Fluffy Clouds," and "Toxygene" are on the 72-minute first disc, while all-new remixes of these and others can be found on the bonus second disc. The Orb (Patterson, Hughes, and Fehlmann) are truly gifted artists, technicians, and engineers. Their music is seamless and rich, whether absolutely soothing or undeniably exhilarating in nature. *U.F.OFF* is a piece of contemporary history that needs to be heard.

Mike Griffin

U.F.OFF The Best of The Orb
The Orb
Island, Domestic

A

Remix compilations are usually hit-or-miss affairs, often weakened by a lack of focus inherent in albums produced by a single artist/group. Richard Dorfmeister (of Kruder & Dorfmeister fame) and Rupert Huber's collaboration (a.k.a. Tosca) is impressive for side-stepping the usual flaws of multi-artist remixed albums. Once only available in four separate remix singles, the album unites all four into a single collection. Featuring the remixes of Fauna Flash, Fila Brazillia, Beanfield, Baby Mammoth and ten other musicians interpreting Tosca's track *F*** Dub* in multiple forms and genres, the album ultimately succeeds in being unique, yet retains a continual flow of rhythm — which often escapes such musical projects involving so many different musical chemists. Although only one song is actually being remixed throughout the EP, each track seems to be a completely different song and not merely an up/down-tempo version of the original. With each additional listen, the album's appeal grows, perhaps because each track avoids the pitfalls of gimmickry and pursues a musical equilibrium of mellow melodies alongside head-bobbing beats. A sleeper of a find.

Gregory Han

F Dub Remix EP***
Tosca
G-Stone Recordings, British Import

B+

Gamers' Re(public) Music Reviews

The music of the *King of Fighters* series has become almost as unique and recognizable as the characters and style. This fact is only obvious now, after four years of *KOF* installments. When you power on a *KOF* game you expect to hear blazing, distorted guitar licks, pounding rock drums, and hectic synthesizers. It's like speed metal crossed with bad eighties rock with a touch of porno soundtrack added for good measure. Whoops, that's kind of insulting. Anyway, *KOF '98: Dream Match Never Ends* contains a few unique tracks that might validate the purchase of this soundtrack. "Blue Mary's BLUES," for example, is totally pornographic, but it has a catchy synthed-up blues guitar and wacky samples here and there. Other tracks, like "Rumblings on the City" and "Rhythmic Hallucination," epitomize the derogatory description I've applied to *KOF* music. This stuff is funny, low quality straight-from-the-arcade crap. This is a two-disc set, though, and Disc 2 is a little easier to consume, thanks to a humorous voice-sample collection. Wait, what am I saying?! Even if you like the *KOF* games, avoid this soundtrack like the plague.

Mike Griffin

King of Fighters '98
Original Game Soundtrack
Pony Canyon, Import

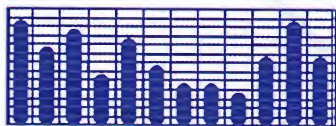
D-

A breathtaking experiment in traditional Celtic beats and contemporary instrumentation, *Creid* does justice to the epic scope of *Xenogears*, the game it is inspired by. The musicianship of Yasunori Mitsuda, who also composed a powerful acid-fusion-jazz motivated rearrangement of tunes from his *Chrono Trigger* soundtrack, *Brink of Time*, shines through with undeniable vigor. Harps, fiddles, acoustic and electric guitars, pipes, fretless bass, accordions, flutes, an assortment of percussion instruments, and modern technology combine to reveal an uncanny yet harmonious combination that exudes an irresistible presence. From the forceful opening song, "Melkaba," to the soft tones of "Balto," each effort strikes an emotional chord that recollects some of the game's most precious moments. "June Mermaid" weeps with passion, "Creid" teems with spirituality, "Stairs of Light" laughs with affection, and "Lahan" reverberates with joy. Those who experienced the splendor of the game up until its climactic end will recognize the closing song, "Mebius," which sums up the CD with strong affection. Anyone pleased with *Xenogears* as a game will find it hard not to be enchanted by this arrangement.

Dave Rees

Creid
Yasunori Mitsuda & Millennial Fair
Digicube, Japanese Import

A



GAMERS' REPUBLIC INTERVIEW with SONIC MAYHEM SOUND TEAM



WHO ARE YOU GUYS AND WHEN DID YOU START MAKING MUSIC?

Sonic Mayhem is a collaboration between Sascha Dikiciyan and David Valencia. We started out working together on our first project called MOD (Methods of Destruction), which was the first music add-on for *Quake* in September 1996.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DID YOU MAKE AT FIRST?

Our first musical ventures were a combination of ambience and industrial beats. After a while we started to get more into technology, guitars and electronic music.

WHAT ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

Pretty much everything from old-school funk to aggressive types of music like *Rage Against the Machine*, as well as early *Kraftwerk* and a lot of the underground music like jungle and drums and bass.

ARE YOU GUYS INTO GAMES? IF SO, WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITES?

Yeah, we are pretty much hard-core gamers. Right now *Metal Gear Solid* lives in our PSX and we've got a bunch of PCs networked on which we play *Q2* after a hard day's work in the studio.

WHY WAS SONIC MAYHEM APPROACHED TO DO THE QUAKE II SOUNDTRACK?

Well, it all started with a couple of e-mails and phone calls from *id* requesting demo material from us. We made two demos for *id*. The first demo that *id* requested was a *Terminator*-style track. They liked it, but then asked us to submit another demo with a more grunge or rock vibe to it. After we sent out the second demo track, *id* called us the very next day asking us to produce music for *Q2*.

HOW CLOSE DID YOU WORK WITH THE GAME AS YOU CREATED THE SOUNDTRACK?

Believe it or not, during the process of producing music we never received a beta copy of *Q2*, so we were pretty much depending on screenshots and the impression we got at the 1997 E3.

WHAT KIND OF EQUIPMENT DID YOU USE TO CREATE THE SOUNDTRACK?

Our basic equipment is a G3 Mac running Cubase VST 24-bit and Protools software. Most of the drum sounds we created were played from the Roland 760 sampler into Cubase Vst. Other keyboards we used included a Korg Trinity and a Prophecy, a Roland Juno 106, as well as the Roland 1080 and 990 modules. Most of the drums you hear on *Q2* are programmed on the computer. We had a lot of people asking us who played the drums... I guess we did good job.

HOW CLOSELY DID YOU WORK WITH ID DURING THE PROJECT?

Basically, once we had a track done, we would send it off to *id* and they would call back to either approve or request revisions, which, out of 17 tracks, only happened twice. [Note that *Q2* had only eight audio tracks. The rest were used in both mission packs, the *Reckoning* and *Ground Zero*.]

DID THEY HAVE A SPECIFIC TYPE OF SOUND IN MIND?

The very first thing *id* mentioned was that they wanted to recreate the old *Doom* feel for *Q2*. They also mentioned a few bands like Metallica and Alice in Chains as guidelines. We then took these guidelines and mixed them up with our own flavor, which included ambience, industrial and electronica.

HOW MUCH CONTROL DID YOU GUYS HAVE OVER THE DIRECTION OF Q2'S SOUND?

id was very specific regarding the style of music, but we had creative freedom in developing the actual sound. We spent a lot of time sampling real drums and creating ambience, along with some hard-core sounds which we would mix up with the style *id* wanted.

HAS THIS PROJECT CHANGED THE WAY YOU MAKE MUSIC AND/OR YOUR TASTES AND STYLE?

This project allowed us to experiment with new production techniques, and these have definitely influenced the way we create music now. We are currently working on an album which is a bit different from the *Q2* soundtrack. The drums are a blend between jungle, dance and hard-core, while the guitars are less grungy and more aggressive.

DO YOU INTEND TO DO MORE GAME SOUNDTRACKS IN THE FUTURE? IF SO, DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC TYPE OF GAME IN MIND?

Over the last two months we have completed music for *Wild 9* and are currently working on the new James Bond game *Tomorrow Never Dies*, due out next year for PSX. We had a chance to redo the classic theme and it kicks ass... very aggressive and plenty of mayhem.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE HOLD FOR YOU GUYS? ANYTHING BIG COMING UP THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

We are currently working on an album which we know will appeal to gamers. We are negotiating deals as we speak, and hope to set a new trend in video game music and the music industry.

You can keep up with us at www.sonicmayhem.com, where we post snippets of upcoming music, etc.

MAGIX SPECIAL

You've probably seen the MAGIX Entertainment ads on MTV lately and wondered what exactly these products are capable of. We tested the whole line of MAGIX software, so here's a rundown of this cool PC sound tool series.

Music Maker V2000 is probably the most accessible product in the MAGIX lineup. *MMV2k* comes packed with over 1000 quality sound samples in eight different music styles (like speed garage, rock, and drum & bass) as well as over 600 video files. You can arrange your own tunes or have the Auto Arranger feature blend the beats instantly. It supports the latest Direct X plug-ins, so you can import WAV, AVI or MIDI files and record with a mic using your soundcard, as well as real-time sync with movie files for pseudo-music-video production. *Live Act 2000* takes the visual connection a step further. The video files offer virtual, realistic, and dancing scenes, and using two onscreen turntables, you can cross-fade and mix individual sounds using the keyboard like a professional synthesizer.

Feel free to integrate any of your *Music Maker* creations into *Live Act* for the ultimate real-time music and video combo. The video isn't exactly mind boggling, but the effect of DJ-ing in real time is true. Finally, for the music purist, there's *Music Studio V2000*. *MSV2k* lets you seamlessly merge midi files of virtually any type (voice, keyboard or instruments) in digital quality with a full audio studio for multi-track recordings using pro studio effects. We haven't had time to go too in-depth, but if you exploit *Music Studio* (with functions like direct-to-hard-drive digital recording), you can achieve surprising CD-quality results. Thanks to Wendy and all at MAGIX Entertainment for the great lineup! Tech freaks (like us) and musical newbies alike should check out the MAGIX products at their local Fry's, CompUSA or Best Buy.



CLASSIFIED

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TONIC TROUBLES' ED

Ed is a turquoise and violet-colored extraterrestrial guy in his mid-20s who accidentally drops a mysterious can during a scientific exploration of the galaxy. The can's contents unleash a series of mutations that affect humans, plants and animals alike. Ed must rescue the can from Grogh the Hellish, a ne'er-do-well who harnesses the can's powers to declare himself Master of the Earth. Along the way, Ed encounters 11 different levels on this insane Planet Earth. The big question is: Can Ed fix this whole mess? Let's examine the situation:

ED, THE CHARACTER, UNDER A MICROSCOPE!

One Unlucky Dude!

Ed is one of those individuals who would historically call unlucky... definitely not your typical super hero. In fact, wherever he goes, disasters occur. And just because Ed doesn't complain about these so-called "misfortunes" does not mean that he is a glutton for punishment - in fact, he's just the opposite. Ed doesn't purposely try to seek out difficult situations, but instead blindly walks head-first into them (or trips!).

But What is Unlucky?

In the end, our anti-hero is a man who makes us re-think our theories about what is lucky and what's unlucky. After all, how can someone who loves life and thrives on having a little fun be considered unlucky? If we twist our thoughts, we can see that maybe the rest of us are the unlucky ones, because given Ed's situations, most mortals would fail miserably. But because of his can-do attitude, his more-than-a-little practice, and most important, because he is completely clueless about reality, Ed perseveres.

He caused a mess, and now he has to clean it up, because it's the only way he can get back to his planet - once he cleans up the mess he caused with his own actions. (Like all of us, right?)

ED'S PERCEPTION OF HIMSELF:

Ed doesn't view himself the way the rest of the world sees him, that's for sure! From our vantage point, we see a small turquoise alien who could be squashed in two seconds. But Ed doesn't see himself that way at all, and therefore Ed isn't squashed! Ed (in his conscious sense, that is) doesn't mind that he is on the smallish side. Consciously, he is not even aware that to some women size matters. In the PC introduction, we see that Ed thinks that he should be able to have his gal because he is the nicer guy, and not a schmow like Burk. He can't imagine that because he is skinny and dopey-looking, he'll have trouble winning the fair maiden. Ed doesn't walk around with the same fears that the rest of us "lucky" people do.

WHAT ABOUT SUPER ED?

But there is a deep subconscious level to Ed, and that's where Super Ed comes into the picture. When he eats popcorn, Ed loses his senses, and enters into the body of his alter-ego, a Hulk lookalike. Even though Ed would never take the time or energy to actually go to the gym and work on becoming buff, on a subconscious level he gets quite a kick and thrill out of becoming Super Ed, even if only for temporary lapses. This sudden transformation is not by choice, or questioned by Ed (he really isn't logical!), but rather is something that overcomes him for a second... but in those seconds, he enjoys breaking down doors, bending bars, and exerting force by his own body - but again, just for a second or two. Becoming Super Ed is a means to an end, so why fight it? Ed is always one to do whatever it takes, even if it is illogical and completely bizarre (which everything he does is!).

ED'S A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY GUY

Ed doesn't waste time wishing that things were different - he's basically a happy-go-lucky guy. Plus, there are so many things to do, so much to accomplish, people to meet along the way, things to look at, taste, see, tackle, discover, etc., so who has time to waste complaining about a situation or wishing things were different? Granted, he's in a bad situation and must fix his mistake of dropping the can, and there is a lot of danger and unknown out there - but as Robert Crumb's character would say, "You've Gotta Keep on Truckin'!" When life hits you over the head (or in the mouth!) with a frisbee, by all means, ride the thing (pertaining to the Ski Slope level in the game, when a frisbee comes out of nowhere, so Ed rides it down the slope - why not?).

DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN THE CHARACTER

Ed is always falling into hard situations. And the "easy way out" just doesn't occur to him. His mind doesn't think effectively in that manner. For instance, if he were smarter, or more forceful, he would demand that the Doc invent a gun instead of giving him a magic stick. But what are you going to do? Ed proves that with the right stamina and can-do attitude, one can find creative solutions with the tools available. An endearing quality about our friend Ed is that he is unable to see that his solutions are any more creative than the next guy's. They are just his way of getting to the next dimension or moment - or level!

HIS QUALITIES/SKILLS

Ed's most important qualities are his infallible energy, style, and hilarious sense of humor. Despite the fact that he is not the most coordinated, and that he burps, falls down, etc., he continues to have the greatest attitude - he isn't going to run away from his task or plea-bargain his way out of something (it wouldn't occur to him, anyway). He is going to fix the mistake he has made by dropping the can on to the Planet Earth. I mean, he was told to fix it and so he is going to do just that - or at least try.

Ed doesn't give a damn about what people think of him. It isn't by choice, though. Again, it just doesn't occur to him. He makes a fool of himself pretty much constantly, but he doesn't notice that the rest of the world thinks he is a pain in the butt, or a klutz. He is Ed. That's it. Just plain Ed.

Actors who have some elements of typical Ed characteristics are Peter Sellers in *Being There*, Woody Allen in *Play It Again Sam* (when he thinks he is Humphrey Bogart), and Mr. Magoo from his cartoon of the '60s.

HIS FAULTS

Ed is not the best person for the job: at first glance, he may be the worst person for the job, but he will give it 100 percent, without a macho attitude. He is not a super hero, or a militaristic power-head. Ed is just a guy who has a job to do that would scare the hell out of anyone, really.

ED'S ORIGINS

Ed is the happy-go-lucky, light-hearted janitor, who, when on an interplanetary journey, accidentally knocks a can off his space craft and poisons the earth. His government, in a diplomatic gesture, sends him to repair the damage done.

ED'S UNIVERSE

Ed's universe (which he inadvertently created) is psychedelic soup. Something that electric Kool-Aid would make you see. There are mutant animals, psychotic vegetables (killer carrots, angry mushrooms, randic turnips, etc.), rainbow-colored rivers, pyramids guarded by mummies with designer handbags, popcorn with superman powers, guards in tutus, sangria flavored glaciers, magical polka-dotted flying bow ties, crazy scientists with robot suitcases, false-teeth traps, and more.

All of the "acid-influenced" characters in the game make up the most humorous, goofy, bizarre group you have ever seen. It is these characters, and the 11 unbelievable environments, which make the game unlike anything else ever played or seen before.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE: ED

THE TONE AND ENVIRONMENTS

The story concept for *Tonic Trouble* revolves around two central themes: the idea that it is the hero who makes the first mistake rather than coming in like a white knight to save the world from a villain or a natural disaster; and the thought that a hazardous accident can turn conventional patterns of behavior on their ear. That is why the vegetables in *Tonic Trouble* have it in for the non-vegetation characters, a deadbeat drunk rises to power, and so on. It is also the motivation behind the surprise ending of the game.

COMMUNITY

A world in shambles, Ed is the only one who can save it - because he's the only one who wouldn't challenge it and refute the sentence cast upon him.

ED'S ACTIONS

Ed can run, jump, fly, use a whupping stick, pogo jump on lava, use a pogo to break ground, aim a blowpipe, grab ledges, and swim. He has 11 different worlds to explore with hidden areas and secret passages. He has to explore all these worlds to find the elements to build the machines to get the famous can out of the hands of Grogh, after which he can return home.

ED'S LIMITS

Ed doesn't have limits that we have seen. Except not to be a fungus, or a schmow like Burk! (In the PC intro - that would be the worst!) Ed has landed in a situation far beyond his control, training and expertise. He's extremely out of his element. But at each level, stage and challenge, he exceeds what he thought, or maybe just what we perceived, his limits to be.

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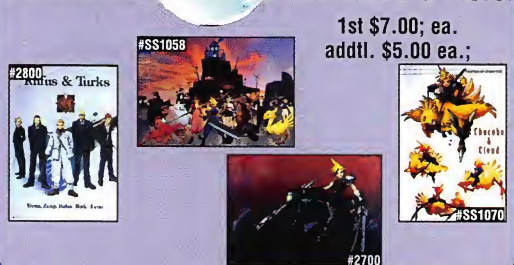
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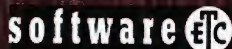
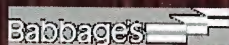
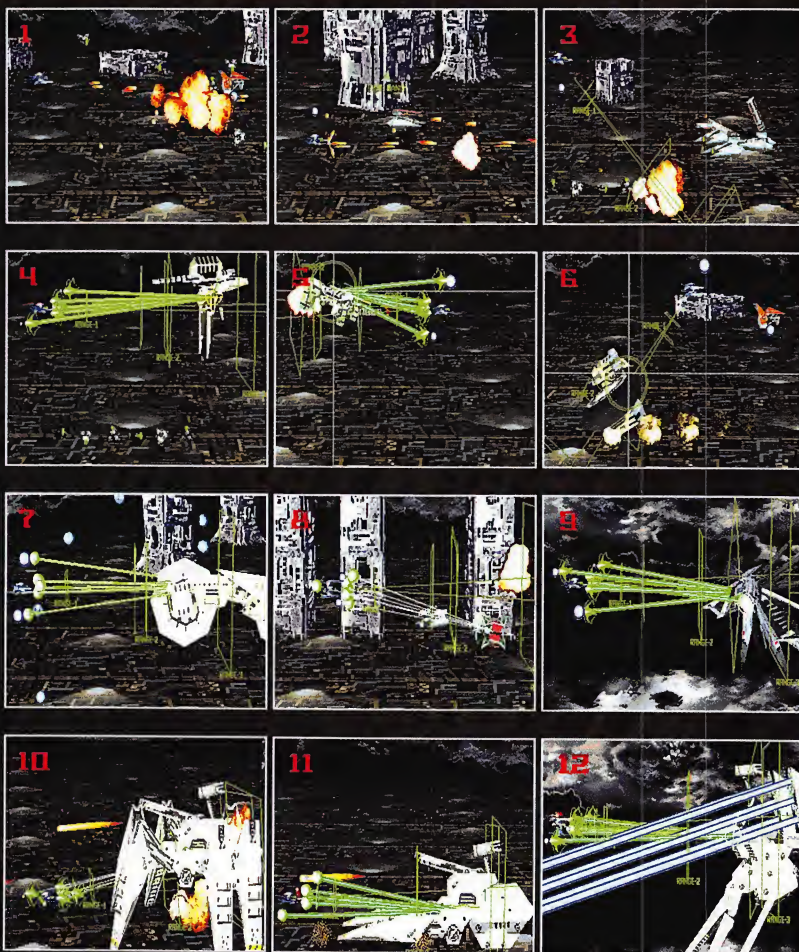
Stage Three Human Road

From the Forest, we enter the mechanized Human Road zone where you'll encounter big scary motorbikes and a devious, transforming boss. As always, set your weapons to Direct mode and blast away. This level is all about one weapon, and one weapon only: the Free Range. Once you pick this up towards the beginning of the level, it's the only weapon you'll need to use.

THUNDER FORCE V

Let Gamers' Republic help you win \$10,000! Use our continuing strategy guide to master Thunderforce V on PlayStation, brought to you courtesy of Working Designs. Look for a new level every month.

As the level begins, stay near the top of the screen and eliminate the first waves of enemy craft with your Twin Shot (01). Grab the Crow and move down in anticipation of the all-important Free Range weapon. Shoot it but take out the tanks and the next strip of foes before grabbing it (02). Once in your possession, aim it down to take out the next enemy grouping (03). Now, move up to blast the two big robots that come from above (04). If you train your Free Range on them immediately, they won't even get a shot off. When you see the danger warning from behind, move to the center with your Free Range pointed back to take out the first chopper (05). Once he's gone, move back and train your weapon forward for the next chopper and blast him. Now stay back and prepare for the first bike. As he enters the screen from the right, get some shots in before moving up and over him to the right as he moves in (06). Take a few shots from the front and move under him back towards the left side of the screen. Just avoid his blue shots, and the Free Range finishes him off in no time (07). The next group of enemies goes down quickly with the Free Range (08). You'll then destroy a bunch of mines, which throw all kinds of little bullets here. Just hang back and move through the rather generous gaps. Keep your Free Range forward and blast through the next wave before you take to the skies. Stay forward and high as the Danger symbols alight. Just as you see the swarm of ships coming from below, quickly move back while blasting them. Do the same for the next group, starting from the front and moving back as they approach from above. The next enemies are self-explanatory as you await the mid-boss. When you see him, just load him up constantly with Free Range and he should fall faster than you can say boom (09). Next up, grab the handy shields and work your magic on the next few normal foes. When you see the Danger signs from below, get ready to fight another bike just as you did before. Now the Boss comes. Armament Armed Arm transforms three times before he's dead. Begin by positioning yourself below and to the right of him, targeting your Free Range on his weak spot (10). He'll transform into a fast ground unit. Stay directly in front of him, firing and moving forward when he fires his lasers and the little blue wisps (11). Finally, he'll transform into an air unit. Just target him and fire, as his shots in this form are easily avoided (12).



Prizes:

Grand Prize (1): \$10,000

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GIANTS



Judging by the descriptive information that has been made available to us, a brief glimpse at the game in motion, and the fact that Nick Bruty and the rest of the MDK team are at the helm, we are certain that Planet Moon's Giants is going to be a revolutionary game-playing experience. This is the first time they've been left to their own devices, and what they are concocting may just spawn a new genre – and we all know how welcome that would be. In the next Gamers' Republic, we'll probe deep into the psyches responsible for this groundbreaking effort. Also, coming in Feb., prepare for the ultimate fps shoot-out between Blood 2, Half-Life, and SIn! Who will be victorious in this fight for PC supremacy and which of these games are headed for Sega's Dreamcast? Blood will be shed and keyboards maimed in an effort to reveal the champion. Along with all this fine family entertainment, we'll take a look at Starshot and other '99 titles for the N64, and, of course, report on the first few Dreamcast games! It's gonna be a good one.

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GIANTS

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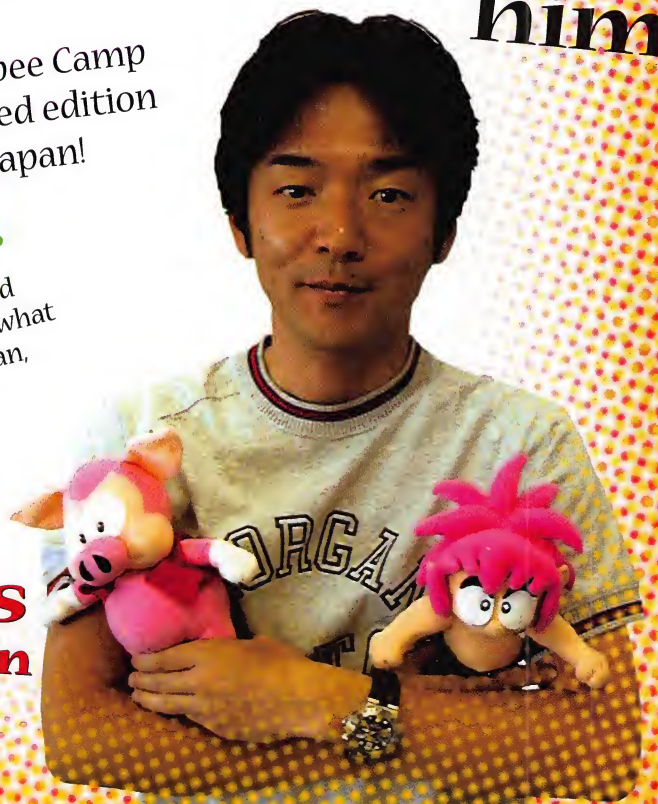
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